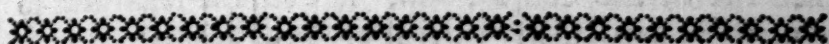


LETTERS

OF THE

MARCHIONESS DE SEVIGNE.



LETTER LXXI.

The Marchioness DE SEVIGNE to Madame DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday 12 July, 1670.

 HAVE received but one letter from you, my dear, this time, which makes me a little angry; I used generally to have two: It is dangerous to use one's self to such dear and tender cares as yours, there is no being easy without them. If your brothers-in-law come to you this summer, they will be good company for you. The Coadjutor has been a little out of order, but is now perfectly recovered; he is incredibly lazy, and is the more to blame, as he can write extremely well when he sets about it. He has a great regard for you, and proposes seeing you about the middle of August; he cannot before. He protests, but I believe it is false, that he has no branch to rest upon, otherwise he would write more frequently; and that it makes his eyes sore. This is all I know about *Seigneur Corbeau*: But only think how odd it is of me, to tell you all this, when I don't know myself how I stand with him. If you should happen to know any thing of the matter, I wish you would inform me. I reflect every hour of the day upon the times when I used to see you always about me, and am perpetually regretting the loss of those happy moments: not that I can reproach my heart with having been insensible of the

the pleasure of your company; for I solemnly protest to you, I never looked on you with that indifference or coolness that grows upon long acquaintance: No, I cannot reproach myself with that; what I regret is, that I did not see you so constantly as I could now wish I had; but suffered cruel business to tear me from you. It would be a fine thing to fill my letters with what fills my heart: Alas! as you say, we should glide over some thoughts, and not seem to regard them. Here then I rest; and conjure you, if I am the least dear to you, to be particularly careful of your health: Amuse yourself, do not study too much, carry yourself safely thro' your pregnancy; and after that, if M. de Grignan really loves you, and is not resolved to kill you outright, I know what he will do, or rather what he will not do. Have you cruelty enough not to finish Tacitus? Can you leave Germanicus in the midst of his conquests? If you really intend to serve him so scurvy a trick, let me know whereabouts you leave off, and I will finish for you, which is all I can do to serve you at present. We have gone thro' Tasso, and with a great deal of pleasure; we found beauties in him, that are unknown to those who are only half-read. We have begun our *morality* *, it is of much the same nature as Pascal's. Talking of Pascal, I have taken into my head to admire those gentlemen, the postillions, who are incessantly carrying our letters backward and forward. There is not a day in the week, but they bring one either to you or me; there is one every day, and every hour of the day, upon the road. Honest lads! how obliging it is of them! What a charming invention is the post, and what a happy effect of Providence is the desire of gain! I am sometimes thinking to write to them, to shew my gratitude; and I believe I should have done it before, had I not remembered that chapter in Pascal, and been afraid that they might perhaps have taken it in their heads to thank me for writing to them, as I thanked them for carrying my letters. Here is a fine digression for you! But to return to our reading: It was without the least prejudice for Cleopatra, that I laid a wager I would read it thro';

you

* M. Nicoll's Moral Essays.

you know how I maintain my wagers. I oftentimes wonder how I came to be fond of such ridiculous stuff. You may perhaps remember enough of me to know how much a bad style displeases me, that I have some taste for a good one, and that no one is more sensible to the charms of eloquence. I well know, how wretched La Calprenedre's style is in many places, on account of its long-winded periods, and bad choice of words. I wrote a letter to your brother in that style the other day, which was pleasant enough. However, tho' I find such glaring faults in Calprenedre, tho' I know how detestable that way of writing is, yet I can't leave it. The beauty of the sentiments, the violence of the passions, and the wonderful success of the puissant heroes, entice me away like a young wench; I become a party in all their designs, and if I had not the example of M. de la R. F. and d'Hacqueville to comfort me, I should be ready to hang myself for being guilty of such a weakness: You rise up to my imagination, and cry shame on me; yet still I go on. I shall get a great deal of honour in being entrusted by you with the care of preserving you in the Abbe's friendship. He loves you tenderly; you are often the subject of our conversation, with your state, and all the rest of it. He would not willingly die without first making a trip to Provence, and doing you some service. I am told, that poor Madame de Montluet is on the point of losing her senses; she has been raving hitherto, without once shedding a tear; but now she has a violent fever, and begins to cry: She says she will be damned, since her dear husband is inevitably so. We go on with our chapel: The weather is very hot; but the mornings and evenings are very fine in the woods, and under the shade of the trees before the house. My apartment is very cool: I am greatly afraid you are not so well off during your heats in Provence.

L E T T E R LXXII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday July 15, 1671.

WAS I to write to you all the fancies that come into my head about you, my letters would always be of an unconscionable size; but that is not very

easy to do ; so I content myself with all that is *writable*, and I think all that is *thinkable* ; I have time and occasion enough for it. La Mouffe has a little defluxion on his teeth, and the Abbe has a little defluxion on his knee, which leaves me my Mall to myself to do what I please in ; and I please to walk in it every evening till eight o'clock. My son is no longer with us, so that here is a silence and tranquillity that is scarcely to be met with any where else. I do not tell you on whom I think, or in how tender a manner ; when things are easily to be guessed there is no occasion for speaking. If you was not with child, and that the *hy-pogryphe* was still in the world, it would be one of the most gallant and ever memorable actions that could be performed, to have the courage to mount its back, and take a ride to visit me sometimes. It would be no great business, for he used to traverse the earth in a couple of days. So upon occasion you might come and dine with me, and be at home to supper with M. de Grignan ; or you might sup here for the sake of the evening's walk, and be at home time enough the next morning to mass in your tribunal. Your brother is at Paris ; but he will not stay there long ; the Count is expected back, and he must not shew himself. I look upon the death of the Duke of Anjou * as a very considerable loss to the nation. Mad. de Villars writes to me very frequently, and always remembers you in her letters : She has a tender heart, and very susceptible of love ; which makes me have a great friendship for her ; she begs me to say a thousand kind things to you in her name. Little St. Geran writes me letters full of such fulsome flattery that I cannot read them, and I in return abuse her, and call her names, which diverts her mightily. This kind of correspondence is not grown stale as yet ; when it is, you shall hear no more of it ; for I should be heartily tired to be obliged to use any other style with her. We continue to read Tasso still : I am sure you would come to like it, if you was to make a third person ; there is a wide difference between reading a book by one's self, and with those that can point out the beautiful passages as they occur, and ex-

* Philip, second son to Lewis XIV. died the 10 June 1671.

cite the attention. This *morality* of Nicole's is admirable; Cleopatra still goes on the old way, but only at vacant hours, and without taking up too much time. I generally take a nap upon it; it is the character that I like much more than the style. I own that the sentiments please me, as they have something so perfect in them, that they come up to my notion of an heroick soul. Mad. du Pleffis does us the honour of her presence here very frequently: Yesterday at table she was saying, that they keep admirable good tables in Lower Brittany, and that at her sister-in-law's wedding they consumed in one day twelve hundred dishes of roast meats. We all sat like so many statues; at last I took heart of grace, and said, consider, dear Madam; you meant two hundred, I fancy, one may be mistaken sometimes, you know, Madam. Oh! dear Madam, not at all; there were twelve hundred or eleven hundred, I will not be positive whether there were eleven or twelve, because I would not willingly tell a lie, but, however, I know very well it was one of them. And this she repeated twenty times, and would not beat a single chicken of her quantity. When we came to reckon, we found that there must have been at least three hundred people to lard the fowls, and that the feasting place must have been a great field, with a number of tents erected for the purpose; and that supposing them only fifty, they must have begun at least three months beforehand. This piece of table-talk would have afforded you a good deal of diversion. Have you no *puffer* like this among your ladies in Provence? Oh! my dear child, the watch which you gave me, and that was always an hour or two too fast or too slow, is now so exactly true, that it does not vary a second from our pendulum. I am vastly pleased at it, and return you thanks now for your present. The Abbe tells me, that he adores you, and that he intends to do you a piece of service, he cannot justly say what or where; but, however, he loves you as well as he does me.

LETTER LXXIII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 19 July, 1671.

I FIND you are quite in a family way on all sides; and I perceive you do the honours of your house extremely well: Let me assure you, that this way of behaviour is much more noble and amiable than a cool indifference, which sits very ill upon one when one is in one's own house. You are very far from being reproachable on this head, my dear child, and there is nothing to be wished more than what you do: I only wish you materials; as for an inclination to make use of them, that, you do not want. You certainly thought it droll enough of me to be talking so much to you about the Coadjutor, when he was with you all the while; but I did not so well know of his having the gout at the time I wrote to you. Ah, *Seigneur Corbeau*, if you had contented yourself with barely asking for *poco di pane, poco di vino*, you would not have been in the condition you are in now. One must bear with the gout when one has deserved it. Ah, my poor friend, I am really sorry for you; but you are paid in coin: But I think you are in no great danger of dying in solitude: I am heartily glad that you find so many ready to divert you. Oh! indeed, *Mad. de Rochebonne*, you are to blame, the Coadjutor will last a long while yet. The offer you made him of finishing your seat, is what he will doubtless accept: What has he else to do with his money? it will never appear in his year's savings. What you say of that maxim I made without thinking, is very just, and well observed. I am willing to believe, for my own sake, that if I had not wrote so fast, but taken a little more time and pains to consider of it, I should have said much the same thing as you: In a word, you are quite in the right, and I am resolved never to publish any thing without having first consulted you. I have so very tender and affectionate a letter from *Brancas*, as makes up for all his past forgetfulness: he breathes his soul in every line; and if I was to answer him in the same style, it would

would be a perfect *Portuguese* *. We should praise no one before they are dead, was excellently well said; we have examples of this every day: But after all, my good friend, the publick is seldom deceived, it bestows its praises on those who do well; and as its discernment is pretty good, it cannot be long deceived; but censures as freely when it finds them do ill: In like manner, when they change from bad to good, it agrees with them. It does not pretend to answer for futurity, but only determines as it finds. The Countess of Gramont, and some others, have experienced the effects of its inconstancy; but it was not the first to change: You have no reason to find fault with it, for it will not begin to be unjust to you. We are all very busy about our chapel, it will be finished about All-Saints. I am perfectly contented with the profound solitude we live in here: The park is much more beautiful than you ever saw it, and my little trees now cast a delightful shade, which was unknown to the diminutive twigs of your time. I am frightened at the noise and hurry we are going to have here: They say that Mad. de Chaulnes † arrived yesterday: I must go to see her to-morrow, there is no avoiding it; but I had much rather be in a cloister, or reading of Tasso: I am become such a proficient in it as would surprise you, and indeed surprises myself. You commend my letters too much; I am well assured of your tenderness; I have long said that you was *true*, a commendation I am fond of; it is new and distinguished from the common ones; but sometimes it is apt to be of prejudice: I feel from the bottom of my heart the good that that opinion now does me. Ah, how few are there of the really *true*! Consider that word a little, you will like it: In the sense I take it in, I find it infinitely more expressive than in the common accepted signification. The divine Plessis is most compleatly *false*. I do her too much honour, even in speaking ill of her; she plays all kinds of characters, the devotee, the woman of capacity,

* Alluding to letters from a Portuguese Nun to a Cavalier, remarkable for the softness and tenderness of the language.

† Elizabeth le Peron, widow of the Marquis de Saint Megrin, and afterwards married to Charles d'Ailli, Duke de Chaulnes.

the timorous, the *petite poitrine*, the honest wench; but her chief excellence is in minicking me, which she does in such a manner, that it diverts me as much as a glass that turned my face into ridicule, or an echo that, like Hudibras's, answered nothing but nonsense: But, I wonder where I find all that I write to you. Adieu, my dearest, how happy are the folks of Provence, that can see you every day! What joy will be mine, when I can fold you in my arms! for that day will come; but I have many anxious hours to pass in the mean while, especially when you grow near your time.

There has been a place in MONSIEUR's family vacant lately, reputed to be worth twenty thousand crowns, which he has bestowed upon the *Angel**, to the great displeasure of all his family. Mad. du Broutai, after having been two years privately married to Fourmenteau †, has, at length, made it publick: She now lives in the same house with him. Fourmenteau is a good match,

Have I told you, that there are two young ladies at Vitre, one of whom is called Mademoiselle *Croque-oison*, and the other Mademoiselle *Kerborgne*? I call Mademoiselle du Pleffis, Mademoiselle *Kerlouche*. I am vastly delighted with these names.

L E T T E R LXXIV.

To the Same.

The Rocks. Wednesday 22 July 1671, St. Magdalen's day, on which a father of mine was killed some years ago.

MADAME de Chaulnes came here a Sunday; but do you know in what manner? Neither better nor worse than on foot, and between eleven and twelve at night: They were taken at Vitre for a parcel of Bohemians? She would have no ceremony at her coming into the town, in which she had her wish; for nobody took any notice of her, and those that did see her in the figure she was in, took her for what I have told you. She came from Nantes by the way of Guerche. Her
carriages

* Madame de Grancei.

† He afterwards had the title of Count de la Vanguion, and was Knight of the King's Order. He shot himself with a pistol the 29th of November, 1693.

carriages had been stopped between two rocks at about half a league's distance from Vitre, the contained being larger than the containing; so that they were obliged to work a passage through the rocks, which was not compleated till next morning at day-break, when they got into Vitre. I went to see her the Monday; and, you may suppose she was glad to see me. The fair *Murinetta* * is with her. They are quite alone at Vitre, till the arrival of Mr. de Chaulnes, who is making the tour of Brittany, and the states who are to sit in about ten days. You may guess of what consequence I am in such a private place. Madame de Chaulnes does not know what to do with herself, and has recourse to me for every thing. You may suppose that I carry it with a high hand over Mad. de Kerborgne: I expect her here after dinner. All my walks are in order, and my park is in high beauty. I intend to ask her to stay here two or three days, to have her fill of walking. As I make some merit of having waited here purposely for her, I intend to acquit myself in such a manner as she shall not easily forget, and yet not run into things beyond what the country might be supposed to afford. Ah, my God! here is a great deal upon this subject. That Madame Quintin, that we used to say was like you, is become quite paralytick, and unable to support herself: Ask her the reason: She is twenty years old. As she passed by my door this morning, she stopped and called for a glass of wine: She had some brought her, and then went on to Pertre, to consult a kind of physician that is in great esteem in this country. What do you think now of this frank and easy way of our Bretons? She was but just come from Vitre, and could not be very dry: So I suppose it was only to give herself an air, and let me know that she had got a Paris carriage. My dear child, am I never to have done with my Brittany news? What a villainous correspondence have you here with a woman from Vitre? It is said, that the court is going to Fontainebleau: The journey to Rochefort and Chambert is at an end; and it is imagined, that in over-setting the autumn's designs, they will overset the Dau-

* Anne-Mary du Pui de Murinais, who was afterwards Marchioness Kerman.

phin's fever, which seized him this season at St. Germain; for this year it will be cheated; it will not catch him there again. You know that M. de Condom † has had the Abbacy of Rebais given him, which was that of the late Abbe de Foix, *poor man!* They are mourning here for the Duke of Anjou, which will somewhat embarrass me, if I am to stay with the states. Our Abbe cannot quit his chapel; that will be the strongest reason in our favour: For as to the noise and bustle in Vitre, it will not be near so agreeable to me as the solitude of my woods, and the company of my books. When I leave Paris and my friends, it is not to appear at the states: My poor little merit, small as it is, has not yet reduced me to the necessity of hiding myself in a country town, like a parcel of wretched strollers. My child, I embrace you with a tenderness that fills my whole soul. Assure M. de Grignan of my love and esteem, and receive the protestations of our Abbe for yourself.

LETTER LXXV.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 26 July, 1671.

THIS is to acquaint you, that yesterday, as I was sitting all alone in my chamber with a book gravely in my hand, I saw my door opened by a tall genteel woman, who was ready to choak herself with laughing; behind her was a man who laughed still more heartily, and behind him again, came a very well-made young woman, who laughed as hearty as the rest of them. Seeing them all laugh in this manner, I fell a laughing myself, without knowing who they were, or what made them laugh. Though I expected Mad. de Chaulnes, who is to make a stay of two days with me, yet I should never have conceived it had been her. Her it was, however; and she had brought Pomenars to see me, who, when they came to Vitre, had put it into her head to come and surprise me. The *Muriette* beauty was of the party; and Pomenars was in such high spirits, that he would have forced a smile even

† James Benignus Bossuet, preceptor to the Dauphin, afterwards bishop of Meaux.

even from sorrow itself. Well, they fell to playing at shuttlecock. Madame de Chaulnes plays at it like you. Afterwards we had a slight collation, and then we took an agreeable walk: You was remembered at all these. I told Pomenars, that you was greatly concerned for the many ugly affairs he had had upon his hands; and that you had wrote me word, that provided he had nothing to encounter but the present affair, you should not be under any great uneasiness; but so many fresh injustices as they were daily loading him with, made you tremble for him. We kept this joke well up: At length, the long walk put us in mind of the fall you got in it one day: This thought called all the blood up into my face. This subject lasted us a good while, and then we talked of the Bohemian dialogue; and, to crown all, of Mademoiselle du Plessis and her follies; and that having said something very silly to you one day, and her frightful face happening to be too near yours, you never stood upon ceremony, but gave her such a box on the ear as made her stagger again; and that I, to soften the matter a little, said, How rude these little wenches play! And then, turning to her mother, Do you know, Madam, that these two young creatures were so wild, that they absolutely fell a fighting this morning? Mademoiselle du Plessis had aggravated my daughter, and so she beat her; it was the merriest thing in the world: And by that turn of mine I so delighted Madame du Plessis, that she was quite charmed to see the two girls so merry together. This piece of good fellowship between you and Mademoiselle du Plessis, which I threw into the lump to make the box on the ear go down, had like to have made them all die with laughing. *La Murinette* approves greatly of what you did, and declares, that the first time she runs her nose in her face, as she does when she speaks to any one, she will serve her just in the same manner, and give her a swinging slap on her ugly phiz. I expect them all here presently. Pomenars will hold his ground, I warrant him. Mad du Plessis will come too. They will shew me a letter from Paris, wrote on purpose, with a relation of five or six slaps on the face, that have passed between ladies there, in order to give a sanction

to those which are designed to be bestowed on her, and even to make her wish for one, in order to be in the fashion. In short, I never saw any thing so mad-headed as Pomenars : His sprightliness increases in proportion to his criminal affairs, and if he has one more, he will certainly die with joy. I am charged with a thousand compliments for you : We have celebrated you here at every turn. Mad. de Chaulnes says that she could wish you such a Mad. de Sevigne in Provence, as she has met with in Brittany, which would render the government desirable ; for what else could do it ? I shall deliver her into the hands of her husband as soon as he arrives, and shall then give myself no further care about amusing her. But, my dear child, how I pity you with your aunt Harcourt ! What a constraint ! What trouble and fatigue are you obliged to bear with ! I should suffer a thousand times more in such a situation than another person, and your presence alone could make me swallow the poison. Was I at Grignan, my dear, I declare to you, that I should clean out rooms, as I have done many times before, rather than be in idleness. After this mark of my friendship, ask me for no more ; for I hate idleness worse than death ; and I should dearly love to laugh with Vardes, *Seigneur Corbeau*, and you. Pray, get rid of that trumpet of judgment as soon as you can. It is now twenty years since I took a dislike to her, and have ever since owed her a visit.

I think your way of life very regular and very good. Our Abbe has an esteem for you, that words cannot easily express : He is all impatience for the plan of Grignan, and the conversation of M. d'Arles : But above all things, he could wish you a hundred thousand crowns to furnish your castle, or do any thing else with that you should choose. All hours are not like those I pass with Pomenars, and even he would soon become tiresome ; for reflections will rise sometimes, that are very contrary to mirth. I told you, that I believed I should not stir from this place to Vitre. Our Abbe cannot quit his chapel. The desert of Bunon, or the dull life of Nantes, with Mad. de Molac, would by no means agree with her active disposition. I shall be frequently

frequently here, and Mad. de Chaulnes, to prevent my being pestered with visits, will always say she is in expectation of me. My labyrinth is very neat; it has green plots and palisades breast high; it is a charming place: But, alas! my dear child, there is little appearance of our ever seeing you here.

† *Di memoria nudrirsi, piu che di speme,*
is my true device. Our sentences were thought very pretty. Can you not readily conceive, that neither day, nor hour, nor moment passes, without my thinking on you, or talking of you, if possible; and that nothing can ever banish you an instant from my mind? We are at length upon finishing Tasso, *e Gofredo a spiegato il gran vessillo de la croce sopra'l muro*. We have had a great deal of pleasure in reading this poem. La Mousse is greatly pleased with me, and with you too, when he thinks what an honour you have done to his philosophy. I do not think you would have had a grain less wit, if your memory had been ever so bad; but, however, both together do very well. We have an inclination to read Guiccardin; for we are resolved not to quit our Italian. *La Murinette* speaks it like her mother tongue. I have received a letter from our Cardinal, who says shocking things of the great Abbe* that is with him. Farewel, my lovely, I shall finish this letter to-morrow, and shall inform you in what manner my company have amused themselves.

It is midnight, and my company are all gone to bed. We made long walks this evening. Pomenars has but just left my room: We have been talking his affairs over very seriously, which are never for less than his life. The Count de Creance is resolved to have his head at all events, but Pomenars will not yield to it. This is the state of the dispute between them†. Mad. de Chaulnes told me just now, that the Abbe Tetu, after having been for some time at Richlieu, had at last, without any ceremony, taken up his residence with Mad. de Fontevraud§, where he has been these two months.

† I live upon remembrance more than hope.

* The Abbe de Pontcarre.

† He was then indicted for a rape.

§ Sister to Mad. de Montespan.

months past. It is about a month since they saw him in their way hither: His pretext is the small-pox being at Richlieu. If his behaviour does not do him a great deal of service, it will do him a great deal of hurt. The little body has sent some songs to her sister, but we did not think them good for much: I am very glad you approved of mine. They could not well have been set higher than the tune you gave them: I wonder I did not hear them sung; but that shews how far it is from hence to Grignan. Alas! how afflicting is that thought, and how weary am I of being so long without seeing you! I am well, my dear child! I am going to bed, very low-spirited; but I embrace you from my inmost soul.

My little one is quite amiable, and her nurse is every thing we could wish. My skill in this is really miraculous, and friendship has taught me to give credit to the wonderful story of a blacksmith whom love made an excellent painter.

L E T T E R LXXVI.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 29 July, 1671.

IT will be July as long as shall please God; as for the month of August, I believe it will be somewhat longer; for it will be the time of the assembly of the states; and, with all due respect to the good company, it is always a slavery to me, to be obliged to go to meet them at Vitre, or else to live in apprehension of their coming hither. It is troublesome, as Mad. de la Fayette says, and my mind is not at all in that key; but one must make the best of it, and pass one's time as others do. Mad. de Chaulnes was quite charmed with the two days stay she made here; and what rendered it more agreeable to her was my being absent; and that was the entertainment I promised her. She used to walk from seven o'clock in the morning in the woods by herself: In the afternoon we had a dance of peasants before the door, that diverted us extremely. There was a man and a woman amongst them, that would not have been suffered to dance in any well-governed nation, for their postures were enough to kill one with laughing.

Pomenars

Pomenars roared, for he had lost all use of speech. I shall not have done with him yet; he does not take a single step which is not likely to be his last; and every time one leaves him, one does not know but it may be an everlasting farewell. They all disappeared on Monday, and I was left at my ease. You will have M. de Vardes with you, when you receive this letter. Let me know if his patience is not quite worn out, and whether he owes his resignation to philosophy or habitude; however, let me hear something about him. I have had a letter from the Marquis de Ch . . . full of expressions of friendship. He mentions Mad. de Brissac, and says, she has wrote to you. I desire, laying all cruelty apart, that you will answer him. You know he may be of service, if properly managed; but will be good for nothing, if slighted: He has all his eye-teeth about him, and will never conceive himself honoured in being refused an answer. I hear that the Count d'Ayen is to marry Mad. de Bourneville. *Mad. de Lutre is just wild about it.* You tell me, in your letter, that I should think of sending your daughter; I beg you will not give that office to any one but me: I will certainly bring her to you myself, if nurse pleases; any other way of sending her would by no means please me. I shall think it the most soothing and agreeable amusement I can have this winter, to see her by my fire-side; let me entreat you not to deny me that small pleasure: I shall have so many things to give me uneasiness about you, that it is but just I should enjoy this one comfort, when I am a little at ease. Well, this affair is settled, and we will talk of her journey when I am about to prepare for mine. I have just been making a small one in my *burly burly*; I mean my wilderness, where your charming idea was my faithful companion. I own that I take great pleasure in walking by myself; one gets into a certain labyrinth of thought, from whence it is sometimes difficult to extricate one's self; but then one has the liberty of thinking on what most pleases one. Farewel, my dear girl.

LET

LETTER LXXVII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 2 August, 1671.

WHAT do you say of the news of this week? We wanted a little mischief; but upon my word I think we have rather too much of it this time. The death of M. de Mans* has quite confounded me: I no more expected it than he did himself; and by the manner of life I used to see him lead, it never once entered my head that he could die: But, however, dead he is, and of a slight fever, without having had time to think of heaven or earth. He passed the time of his illness in a stupidity; it was a tertian that carried him off. Providence does sometimes give such instances of its power as delight me; and we ought to turn these to our profit. Poor Lenet too is dead, which I am really sorry for. Oh! how pleased should I have been, if the news about Mad. de L**** had come by itself! I am not at all sorry for her; her manner of behaviour was so infamous and scandalous, that I have a long time struck her out of the number of mothers: all the young people of the court have taken part in her disgrace; she will nor see her daughter, and all her people are taken from her: Here is a number of lovers dispersed. You have now the great Chevalier with you, and the Coadjutor too; but pray tell this latter, that I desire he will not write to me, but keep his right hand to play at cards: not that I am not fond of his letters; but I have still a greater fondness for his friendship. I am perfectly acquainted with his humour, and I know that it is impossible for him to write to his friends without making them suffer for it; and I think it is purchasing a letter too dear, when it costs me a part of his tenderness. We are all of us positive, that if he was obliged to write twice a week to any one, he would hate them as bad as death.

* Philibert-Emanuel de Beaumanoir, Commandant of the King's orders, died the 27 July, 1671.

L E T-

LETTER LXXVIII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 8 August, 1671.

I AM very glad that M. de Coulanges has sent you some news. You will hear of the death of M. de Guise, which has quite overwhelmed me; especially when I think of the grief that Mad. de Guise must be in. You may well think, my dear, that it is only by the force of imagination, that this death makes me uneasy; for otherwise nothing would give me less concern. You know how I dread self-reproach: Mad. de Guise has nothing to reproach herself with, but the death of her nephew; she never would suffer him to be bled, and the quantity of blood flew up into his head, and made him raving: A mighty agreeable little circumstance this! for my part, I think, as soon as a person falls sick at Paris, it is over with him. There never was the like known.

You shall now have news about the states, for your pains of being a Breton. M. de Chaulnes made his entry a Sunday evening, with all the noise that Vitre could afford; the next morning he sent me a letter, which I answered by going to dine with him. There were two tables in the same room, at one of which was M. de Chaulnes, and at the other his lady. There was a great deal of good cheer, whole dishes of victuals were carried away untouched, and the doors were obliged to be made higher, to let in the pyramids of fruit. Our forefathers had certainly no notion of these kind of machines, since they simply imagined, that if a door was high enough for themselves to come in at, it was sufficient. Well, but a pyramid is to make its entry; one of those, for instance, that lays you under the necessity of hollowing to one another at the end of the table: but so far is that from being an inconvenience in this part of the world, that you are often very well pleased at not seeing what they hide. This same pyramid, with about twenty or thirty pieces of China on it, was so completely over-set in coming in at the door, that the noise it made silenced our violins, hautboys, and trumpets. After dinner

dinner Mess. de Lomaria and Coetlogon danced some excellent jiggs with two Breton ladies, and minuets that far exceeded any I have seen at court; I am persuaded you would have been greatly pleased with Lomaria's dancing; the music and dancing at court is really surfeiting in comparison with this. It is very extraordinary how they can make so many different steps, and to such short yet just time: I never saw any man dance this kind of dance like Lomaria. After this little ball was over, we saw all those that were come in crowds to open the assembly of the states. The next morning came the first president, the procurators, the advocates general of the parliament, eight bishops; Mess. de Molac, La Coste, and Coetlogon the father; M. Boucherat* from Paris, and fifty or sixty Bas-Bretons laced up to the very eyes, besides an hundred of the commons. The same evening were expected Madame de Rohan and her son, and M. de Lavardin, at which I was greatly astonished. I did not see these latter; for I was resolved to return hither and lie, after having been to the tower of Seigne to see M. d'Harrouis, and Mess. de Fourche and Chesieres, who were just arrived. Monfr. d'Harrouis will write to you, he is quite charmed with your civilities; he has had two letters from you at Nantes, for which I am more obliged to you than he is. His house is going to be the Louvre of the states: There will be such play, such good living, and such a freedom day and night, as will draw every creature to him. I had never seen the states before; it is a pretty thing enough: I do not think that there is any province whose assembly has so grand an air as this. It will be very full, I fancy, for there is not one of the members either at court or in camp, except the little Guidon†, who, perhaps, may rejoin them ere long. I shall go presently to pay a visit to Mad. de Rohan. I should have a number of people here, if I did not go to Vitre. There was great rejoicing to see me at the states, as I was never there before: I would not be present

* Afterwards Chancellor of France.

† Meaning her son, the Marquis de Seigne, who was Guidon, or cornet to the Dauphin's Gend'armes.

present at the opening, as it was too early in the morning. The sessions will not hold long: There is nothing to do, but ask what the King orders; no reply is made, and the affair is over. As for the governor, he picks up, I do not know how, near 40,000 crowns by the job. Would you know what the states are composed of? A multitude of presents, pensions, repairs of highways, fifteen or twenty large tables, a continual round of dancing and gaming; plays three times a week; and a great deal of shew and splendor. I have forgot three or four hundred pipes of wine, which are drank out there. But I did not reckon this small article, tho' I assure you it is a capital one with them. These now are what you call tales to sleep upon; but they run off the end of one's pen when one is in Brittany, and has nothing else to say. I have a thousand compliments to make you from M. and Mad. de Chaulnes: I wait for Friday, when I am to receive your letters, with an impatience worthy of the extreme friendship I have for you.

LETTER LXXIX.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 9 April, 1671.

YOU are not sincere in praising me so much, at the expence of your own merit. It would become me very ill to make your panegyrick to yourself, and you will never suffer me to say any thing ill of myself: I shall therefore neither do one nor the other; but, my dear girl, if you have any fault to find with me, it is not for being wanting in the knowledge of the good qualities and fundamental virtues you possess. You have reason to return God thanks for the gifts he has bestowed on you; as for me, I have not merit enough of my own to transfer any to you: But, be that as it may, you make an excellent use of your reflections. What you say relating to the inquietude we are so naturally under with respect to futurity, and how insensibly our inclination changes, and accommodates itself to necessity, is the best subject that can be for such a book as Pascal's. Nothing can be more solid and useful

useful than such kind of meditations. But how few young people do we find now a-days capable of making such? I know none: You have a fund of reason and constancy that makes me honour you; as for me, I have not near so much, especially when my heart takes pains to afflict me. My words may be just enough, and I may range them in the same manner as those that speak well: But the tenderness of my sentiments destroys me: For example, I have not been deceived in my griefs for being separated from you. I imagined them just such as I have experienced them to be. I cannot say I have found the proverb hold good with respect to me, that *as the cold is, so should be the garment*; for I have no garment of defence against this chill to my heart. But, however, I amuse myself, and time slides away, and this particular instance does not hinder the general rule from being always and invariably true. We fear such things as evils, which lose that name, by the change that is wrought in our thoughts and sentiments. I beseech God to preserve the goodness of your mind. You say you will love me at once for yourself and for your child: Ah! my dear, do not undertake so many and great things! Were it even possible for you to love me as well as I do you, which, however, is impossible, nor indeed in the order of nature; yet then my little one would have the advantage of me in your heart, and fill it with the very same tenderness as that I feel for you.

I went on Monday to dine with M. de Chaulnes, who has kept the states sitting twice a day, to prevent them from coming to see me. I am ashamed to tell you what honours they do me in the states: it is absolutely ridiculous. However, I have not lain here yet, and no entreaties can prevail on me to abandon my woods and my walks. I have been here these four days; it is such charming weather, that I cannot shut myself up in a little dirty town. But, my dear child, who is to lay you? Is your help to come from afar? Do not forget your last lying-in, nor yet what happened to you the first time, nor the occasion you had for a skilful and bold hand. You are sometimes at a loss to know how to give me proofs of your friendship;

ship; here now is just the time and occasion to shew it: I require this proof at your hands; and if for my sake you will be particularly careful of yourself, the balance of the obligation will be mine to pay. Ah! my dearest child, how easily may you acquit yourself of all you owe to me! Could all the riches, all the treasures on earth, give a joy or satisfaction equal to that of your love and esteem? And, to reverse the medal, What could be so dreadful as the contrary?

The Letter you wrote to Mad. de Villars is very good; but yet I do not think the style so easy as that of some others I have seen from you: But, in fact, no one can write better than yourself; and Mad. de Villars will be very well pleased with your Letter. When the Coadjutor's foot is better, let me beg him to answer Mons. d'Agén, about that nun who puts his whole diocese in confusion: I shall take that Letter to my own account, and give him credit for three months. I cannot think his jests as bad as those of M. de la R. F. they are very different from those which are got by striving for them: Is not this a little intricate? Do you understand it? These are among the number of cunning things. But what is it you tell me of having pains in the hip: Is your little boy become a girl? Well, never give yourself any concern about it, I will help you to expose it on the Rhine, in a little basket of reeds, and then it shall land upon some kingdom, where her beauty will become the subject of a romance. Here am I, turned a perfect Quixote. There are some shocking things in Cleopatra, but there are some very beautiful ones too; and true virtue is certainly on her throne there. The finishing Tasso has given us pleasure and displeasure; for we do not know what to set about next; we must wait till the states are gone, before we undertake any thing. Was it to you I was saying the other day in a Letter, that I thought all the stones in Vitre were metamorphosed into gentlemen? I never saw such crowds of people together: But, my dear child, I want to hear what passes round about you. Lord! I am quite in Provence, that country is absolutely become my own. Why was my life laid out and disposed at such a distance from you?

To

TO MONSIEUR DE GRIGNAN.

No one but you, my dear Count, could ever have prevailed on me to give my daughter to a Provencal ; this is absolute truth, as Caderouffe and Merrinville will witness for me ; for if I had been as fond of this letter as I was of you, and had I not been mistress, from the fear I had of coming to a conclusion, it had been all over. Do not entertain the least doubt of my having the highest opinion of you ; a moment's reflection will convince you of the truth. I am not in the least surpris'd at my daughter's not mentioning me to you ; she serv'd me just in the same manner about you the last year ; therefore believe, whether she tells you so or not, that I shall never forget you. I think I hear her scold now, and say, Ah ! this is a pretence of yours to excuse your own laziness. I shall leave you to argue this between yourselves, and assure you that, tho' you are perhaps the most happily formed for universal love and esteem of any man in the world ; yet you never was, nor ever will be, more sincerely loved by any one than by me. I wish for you in my Mall every day : But you are very proud ; I see, that you expect me to come and see you first : You may think yourself very happy that I am not an old grandame ; but am resolv'd to employ the remains of life and health in making that journey : Our Abbe seems to have a greater mind to it than myself ; that is one good thing. Adieu, my dear Grignan, love me always ; Let me see you, and you shall see my woods.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

I RETURN to you, my dear child, to let you know, that Mons. d'Andilli has sent me the collection he has made of the Letters of M. de St. Cyran ; they are the finest things in the world ; they are, in fact, so many maxims and christian sentences ; but so admirably turned, that they are as easily retained by heart as those of M. Rochefoucault. When this book is published, desire Mad. de la Fayette, or M. d'Hacqueville, to ask Andilli for a copy for you, who will be greatly oblig'd to you for this mark of confidence. When you reflect,
that

that he never made a farthing of any thing he ever published, you will be convinced that it is doing him a favour to ask him for one of his books. I defy M. Nicole himself to say any thing better than what you wrote about the change of the passions : There is not a single word too much or too little in the whole.

LETTER LXXX.

To the Same.

Vitre, Wednesday 12 August, 1671.

HERE am I at length, my dear, in the midst of the states, otherwise the states would have been in the midst of the Rocks. Last Sunday, just as I had sealed my letters, I saw four coaches and six drive into the court, with fifty armed men on horseback, several led horses, and a number of pages mounted. These were M. de Chaulnes, M. de Rohan, M. de Lavardin, Messrs. Coetlogon, de Lomaria, the Barons de Guais, Bishops of Rennes and St. Malo, and the Messrs. d'Argouges, and eight or ten more whom I did not know. I forgot M. d'Harrouis, but it is not worth while mentioning him. Well, I received all these good folks : A great many compliments passed on both sides ; and after a walk, with which they were all very well pleased, a very genteel and excellent collation came from one end of the Mall ; and, to crown all, there was Burgundy wine as plenty as ditch water. They could not be persuaded but it was all the work of enchantment. M. de Chaulnes pressed me to go to Vitre ; accordingly here I got last Monday night. Mad. de Chaulnes gave me an elegant supper, with the comedy of *Tartuffe* after it, not badly played, I assure you, for a strolling company ; and then we had a ball, where the minuet and jiggs were very near making me cry ; for they brought you so fresh to my remembrance, that I could not resist it, and was obliged to seek something to divert my thoughts. They talk to me of you here very frequently, and I do not long study for an answer ; for I am generally thinking of you at the same time, so that I sometimes fancy they see my thoughts through my stays. Yesterday I received all Brittany at my tower of Sevigne. I was at
the

the play again : It was *Andromache* : It cost me above six tears ; enough in conscience for a country company. At night we had a supper, and a ball. I wish you could but see M. de Lomaria, and with what a genteel and easy manner he pulls off and puts on his hat : Upon my word he cuts out all our courtiers ; he may make them ashamed of themselves : He has 60000 livres a year, is just come from the academy, and resembles every thing that is handsome and agreeable, and would very gladly have you for a wife. I would not have you suppose that your health is not drank very frequently here. The obligation indeed is not very great ; but, such as it is, you are indebted for it every day to half Brittany. They begin with me, and then Mad. de Grignan comes of course. The civilities they shew me are so ridiculous, and the women of this country so foolishly ceremonious, that you would think there was not a person of quality in the town but myself, though it is full of nothing else. Of your acquaintance here is Tonquedec, the Count des Chapelles, Pomenars, the Abbe de Montigni, who is Bishop of St. Paul de Lyon, and a thousand others. Madame de Coetquen is ill here of a fever : Chesieres is somewhat better ; there has been a deputation of the states to compliment him. We are as polite here as the polite Lavardin himself, who is perfectly adored among them : He has a great deal of heavy merit, like Grave wine. My Abbe goes on with his building, and cannot be prevailed on to stay at Vitre : He comes and dines with us sometimes. As for me, here I shall stay till Monday, and then shall retire to my solitude, where I shall pass eight or ten days, and afterwards return to take my leave of them all ; for the end of the month will see the end of the whole affair. Our present has been made this week and more : The demand was for three millions * : We immediately offered two millions and a half : This was accepted, and the affair done. Over and above this the governor is to have 50000 crowns, M. de Lavardin 80000 francs, and the rest of the officers in proportion ; the whole for two years. You must imagine, that as much

wine

* Of livres.

wine passed through the bodies of our Bretoners, as there does water under their bridges; for it is upon this commodity they get the infinite deal of money they distribute among the states. Now, thank God, you are pretty well instructed in what relates to your good country. But all this while I have no letter from you, and, consequently, nothing to answer: So that I must naturally speak of what I see and hear. Pomenars is a most extraordinary creature: I do not know any man to whom I would so readily wish a couple of heads; for he will never be able to carry his own safe off. For my part, I long to see the week at an end, that I may repay all the civilities I have received from the good folks here in a proper manner, and then retire to enjoy myself at the Rocks. Farewell, my dearest, I always expect your letters with impatience. Your health is a thing that concerns me nearly: I believe you are persuaded of the truth of this; so that, without giving into *the justice of believing*, I may put an end to my letter, and sleep securely on what you think of my friendship.

LETTER LXXXI.

To the Same.

Vitre, Sunday 13 August, 1671.

WHAT, my dear child, you have been like to be burned, and you would not have me be frightened! You are resolved to lie-in at Grignan, and you would not have me be uneasy at it! Desire me, at the same time, not to have a love for you; but be assured, that while you are what you are to my heart, that is, while I have life, I cannot look with indifference on any evil that is likely to befall you. I begged Deville to take his rounds every night, to prevent these accidents from fire. Had not M. de Grignan fortunately rose before day-light, only consider what a situation you would have been in, and what would have become of your house? I am persuaded you did not omit returning God thanks for your deliverance. As for me, I had too great an interest in it to omit it on my side.

Monf.

Monf. de Lavardin gives himself a few love-airs to a little Madame here: I think it stands him in as good stead as a fan. I told Mad. de Coulanges the compliments you sent her: She received them in such a manner, returned them so heartily, that I am persuaded she would be glad to have you for her lieutenant-general, even at the expence of Molac and Lavardin †. These are the only good poets; the king's lieutenants are not worthy to carry your train. I am here still; M. and Mad. de Chaulnes do their best to keep me with them. These kind distinctions make me admire the ladies of this country; and but for these, you may very well think, I should hardly stay at Vitre, where I have no kind of business. The players have amused us, the dancers have diverted us, and our walks have supplied the place of the Rocks. But all this will not hinder me from going there to-morrow, where I shall be happy to see no more feasts, and to be a little to myself. I perish with hunger in the midst of all their dainties; and I proposed to Pomenars to order a leg of mutton to be dressed for us at the tower of Seigne against midnight, when we left Mad. de Chaulnes. In short, whether it be from necessity or inclination, I die to be once more in my own Mall, from whence I shall not stir these eight or ten days. Our Abbe, la Mouffe and *Marphise* are in great want of my presence; the two first indeed come and dine with us sometimes. The Governess of Provence is often talked of; for you must know it is by this title that M. de Chaulnes always begins your health. They were saying at table last night, that the other day at Paris, Arlequin came in with a great stone under his little cloak, and, upon being asked what he was going to do with that stone, Oh, said he, it is the pattern of a house that I want to sell. This story made me laugh; and I vowed I would let you know it in my next letter. So if you like the invention, my dear, you may make use of it to sell your lands by. What think you of the marriage of MONSIEUR? This is a stroke of the
Palatine's;

† Lieutenants-general to the province of Brittany.

MARCHIONESS DE SEVIGNE. 169

Palatine's ; it is a niece of his †, and the Princess of Tarente. You may judge how great is the joy of MONSIEUR to be married by proxy, and how charmed he must be to have a wife that cannot speak a word of French.

Mad. de la Fayette tells me she was going to write to you, but that she was hindered by the head-ach. I do not know whether one had not better be without Pascal's § great understanding, than to be subject to the same inconveniencies. I am glad I can be sure of another house at Lyons, besides that of the Intendant's. For as much as any one can be sure of any thing in this world, I am sure of making a journey to Provence this next year. My dear child, take good care of yourself between this and that. This is my only concern, and the thing in the world for which I shall be the most obliged to you. It is by this that you can give me the most solid proofs of the regard you express for me. I suppose you see a great number of Provencals at Grignan ; but you cannot conceive the quantity of Bretonners we see here every day ; it is beyond all imagination. You highly delighted me in telling me you love the Coadjutor, and that he loves you. I am fond of this union ; for I think it necessary to your welfare : Preserve it, and take his advice in all your affairs. Our Abbe still adores you. La Mousse has one tooth less, and my little girl one more : So goes the world. My blessing upon Flachere for preserving you from the fire. I embrace you a thousand times more tenderly than I can say. The noise of the backgammon-table at M. de Harrouis' has perfectly cured Chesieres.

LETTER LXXXII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 19 August, 1671.

YOU described very pleasantly the disorder my perfumed paper occasioned you. Those who saw you read my letters thought that I was dead, and could

† The Princess Elizabeth, Charlot-Palatine of the Rhine.

§ Blaise Pascal was one of the brightest geniuses of his age, but was extremely subject to violent pains in the head. He died in 1662, in the flower of his age.

never imagine that they contained nothing but chit-chat. I am very near correcting myself in the manner you imagined. I shall always run into extremes in what is for your good, if it depends upon me. I already began to think that my paper might do you hurt; but I did not intend to change it till about November. However I begin from this day; and for the future you will have nothing to do but to guard against the ill smell of it.

You have a tolerable number of the Grignans with you: The Lord deliver you from the aunt ||. I feel her troublesome even here. The Chevalier's sleeves must have had a curious effect at the table; but though they draw every thing along with them, I much question whether they would draw me, however fond I may be of the fashions. I have a great aversion to so much slovenliness. Here would be a fine provision for him at Vitre. I think I never saw such good living in any place before. There is not a table at court that can come up to the meanest of the twelve or fifteen that are constantly kept up here: And, indeed, there is occasion for all this; for there are no less than three hundred people to be provided for, who have nowhere else to eat. I left this good town last Monday, after having made your compliments to Mad. de Chaulnes, and Mad. de Murinais. Nothing could be more cordially received, or more warmly returned. All Brittany was drunk that day. We dined apart. There were forty gentlemen dined in a lower room, each of whom drank forty healths a-piece: The King's was the first, and then the glasses were broke. All this was done under pretence of great joy and gratitude, for a hundred thousand crowns which his Majesty had remitted out of the free gift the province had made him, as a recompence for their having so chearfully complied with his request. So now there is only two millions two hundred thousand livres, instead of five hundred thousand. The King has moreover wrote a letter with his own hand full of the kindest expressions to his good province of Brittany. This letter the Governor read to

|| Ann d'Ornano, Countess of Harcourt, aunt to M. de Grignan.

to the states assembled, and a copy of it was registered. Upon this a cry was raised of *Vive le Roi*, and immediately they fell to drinking; and drink they did, God knows! Monf. de Chaulnes did not forget the Governess of Provence; and a Breton gentleman going to drink you by your name, and not being able to think on it, gets up, and, in a loud voice, cries out, Here is to Mad. *de Carignan*. This ridiculous mistake set M. de Chaulnes a laughing till it brought tears into his eyes. The Bretons continued it, thinking it was right; and, for this week to come, you will be nothing but *Mad. de Carignan*. Some called you the Countess of *Carignan*. This was the state of affairs when I left them.

I have shewn Pomenars what you say of him: He is highly delighted with it; but I assure you, he is so hardened and impudent, that once or twice in a day he makes the First President leave the room, to whom he is a mortal enemy, as well as to the Procurator-General. Mad. de Coetquen received the news of the death of her little girl: She fainted away upon it: She is in great affliction, and says she never shall have another so pretty: But her husband is quite inconsolable: He is just returned from Paris, after having made matters up with Le Bordage. This was a most extraordinary affair: He has given up his resentment to Monf. de Turenne. I suppose you do not give yourself any concern about all this; but it fell from my pen. A Sunday there was a pretty ball. We saw a girl of Lower Brittany, that, they said, carried all before her. She was a most ridiculous creature as I ever saw, and threw her body into such postures as made one ready to die with laughing. But there were other dancers, both men and women, that were really admirable. If you ask me how I like my Rocks after all this hurry, I shall tell you, that I am rejoiced to be here again. I shall stay for a week or ten days at least, in spite of all their endeavours to get me back. I am in such want of rest as I cannot describe to you: I want to sleep, I want to eat; for I am always starved at these feasts: I want to refresh myself, I want to keep from talking; for I was attacked on all sides, and really my lungs were

almost worn out. In short, my dear, I found our Abbe, La Mouffe, my Dog, my Mall, Philois, my Masons, all as I left them; and they are the only things that can do me any good in my present condition. When I begin to be tired of them, I will take another trip to Vitre again. There are some people of good understandings among this crowd of Bretons, and some that were even worthy to talk with me about you.

I was as much hurt as you with the *puffing up of the heart* †. That word *puffing up* displeases me a good deal; besides, I told you the texture was the same as in Pascal's works; but then that texture is so beautiful, that it always pleases me. Never was the human breast better anatomized than by these two authors. If you intend to go on with communicating your opinion of it, La Mouffe will answer you better than I can; for I have not yet read twenty leaves in it. I am quite in despair about the loss of my packets; those dear, those charming letters, with which I am surrounded, that I so often read over and over, that I gaze upon, that I so much approve. Is it not a distracting thing for me to know, that you write to me twice a-week, and yet to have received but one letter for these four weeks past? Was it to ease you, I should approve of it, and even desire it might be so; but you have wrote them, and I cannot get them. If you keep a memorandum of the dates of yours, you will find how many are missing. I know you used to do it for that rogue Grignan; and shall I embrace him after such a preference? Let me know something about Mad. de Rochebonne*, and make my kind remembrances to the Coadjutor; and the genteel Chevalier, whom I expressly forbid to get on horseback in your presence. I hear that my *little heart* † is very well: It is going to be put in coats, that is pretty, my *little heart* in a robe.

Monf.

† *Enflure du coeur*] An-expression used by Mr. Nicole in his Moral Essays.

* Theresâ Adhemar de Monteil, wife to Charles Francis de Chateauneuf, Count de Rochebonne, and sister to M. de Grignan.

† *Mes petites entrailles*] Thus Mad. de Sevigne used to call her little grand-daughter (Mary-Blanch), whom she had left at nurse in Paris.

Monf. d'Harrouis is as much furprised as yourself at Mad. de L'—'s adventure. Your way of reasoning is very juſt: But though the good man was accuſtomed to his own diſgrace, he could not bear with that of his ſon-in-law's; and that made him break out. The mother's trade was very well known. You did excellently in writing to Mad. de Lavardin: It was what I wiſhed: You have prevented my deſires. There! the Abbe's lacquey, in playing with pretty Jaquine, has thrown her down, and broke her arm and her wiſt: The poor creature's cries are ſhocking. They are gone for that man who attended St. Aubin. It is ſurpriſing to ſee how ſoon an accident may happen; and yet you would not have me be in fear of overſetting; that is all I am apprehenſive of; for if any one could aſſure me, that I ſhould not be hurt, I ſhould have no objection to rolling now and then five or ſix miles in a chariot; but after what I have juſt ſeen, I ſhall be always in terror about a broken arm. Farewell, my deareſt, you know how much I am yours, and that I am full as much ſo from inclination as by the ties of nature.

LETTER LXXXIII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 23 Auguſt, 1671.

SO then you was with your preſidentefs de Charmes when you wrote to me; her huſband was the intimate friend of Monſieur Fouquet; am I right? In ſhort, my dear, you was not alone; and M. de Grignan was much in the right, to make you leave your cloſet to entertain your good company; tho' he might have ſpared his Capuchin's beard; indeed he did not appear much the worſe for it in your eyes; for when he was at Livri, with *his hairy thicket* *, you thought him handſomer than Adonis. I often repeat thoſe four verſes with admiration. It is ſurpriſing what an impreſſion the remembrance of any particular time ſhall make upon the mind, whether good or bad. Sometimes I repreſent that autumn to myſelf as the moſt agreeable I ever paſſed: And then again, when I think

* Sa touffe ebouriſſee] Part of a bout rime, filled up by Mad. de Grignan.

of this latter part of it, I perfectly sweat with horror*. And yet we have a great deal to be thankful for to Providence, who delivered you out of the danger you was in. Your reflections upon the death of M. de Guise are admirable; they have wetted my eyes sufficiently in my Mall; for it is there I meditate with most pleasure. Poor La Mouffe has been violently afflicted with the tooth-ach, so that for a long time I have walked till night by myself, and thought upon — God knows what I did not think upon. Do not be under apprehensions of my growing weary of solitude; set aside the ills that arise from my own heart, and against which I have not strength to struggle; and I am not to be pitied in any thing. I am tolerably happy in my temper, that can suit itself to, and be pleased with, any thing: And I am much better contented with my retirement here, than with all the noise and pageantry of Vitre. I have been here for near a week, in such ease and tranquillity as has cured me of a most dreadful cold. I drank nothing but water; I spoke very little; and left off suppers; and by this means, without being once confined from taking my usual walks, I am quite well again. Madame de Chaulnes, Mad. de Murinais, Mad. Fourche, and a very genteel young girl from Nantes, came here last Thursday: Mad. de Chaulnes told me, as she came into my room, that she could not be longer without seeing me; and that she was just fatigued to death with being in Brittany, and directly flung herself upon my bed; we sat round her, and in less than a moment she was fast asleep, from mere fatigue: We continued talking, and presently she waked again, highly charmed with the ease and freedom we live in at the Rocks. We then went to take a walk, and afterwards sat down to rest ourselves in the centre of the wood, while the others were diverting themselves in playing a mall. I made her tell me how she came to be married to M. de Chaulnes; for I always love to find out something by way of dissipation; but in the midst of our entertainment came on just such a treacherous rain as happened to us once at Livri, which, without giving us the

* On account of a miscarriage that Mad. de Grignan had at Livri the 4th November, 1669.

the least notice, fell on us with such fury as to half-drown us, and made the water run in streams from our clothes; it came thro' the trees in a moment, and in another inoment we were wet to the skin. We took to our heels, some squalling out, others sliding, others falling down; at last, in we got, a roaring fire was made, we changed ourselves from head to foot; I furnished the whole wardrobe; we got ourselves as dry as we could, and ready to split with laughing all the while. In this manner was the governess of Brittany treated in her own government. After this we had a pretty collation, and then the poor woman left us, more vexed, I don't doubt, at the part she was to play when she got back, than at the affront she had received here. She made me promise to relate this adventure to you, and to go to-morrow, and assist her in entertaining the states, which will break up in about a week: I gave her my word to do both; of one I now acquit myself, and shall clear myself of the other to-morrow, as I cannot dispense with shewing this piece of complaisance.

Madame de la Fayette will have told you, how M. de la R. F. has made his son (the Prince de *Marillac*) a Duke, and the manner of the King's giving him a new pension. After all, the manner is worth all the rest, is it not? We used sometimes to laugh at this speech, so common with all the courtiers. You have the Prince Adhemar with you now, tell him that I received his last letter, and embrace him for me. You have, if I reckon right, five or six Grignans: It is a great happiness, as you say, that they are all agreeable and sociable people; otherwise it would be the to ment of your life; but as it is, they make it pleasant and agreeable. I hear that the measles are at Sully, and that my aunt is going to take *my little heart* home with her: Poor nurse will be very angry at it, I know: But what can be done? It is absolutely necessary.

Monsieur de Chefieres is here; he found all my trees finely grown, which surprised him greatly, after having seen them a little while ago *no higher than this*, as M. de M. used to say of his children. I am very glad that poor Grignan's disorder was of so short duration; I embrace

brace him, and wish him all kind of health and happiness, as well as his dear half, whom I love more than myself; at least I feel it a thousand times more. Our Abbe is very much yours. La Mousse waits for the letter you are composing.

LETTER LXXXIV.

To the Same.

*Vitre, Wednesday 26 August, 1671, in
Madame de Chaulnes's closet.*

IN the first place, I am desired to make you a thousand protestations of friendship, love, and esteem. After so happy a beginning, you will doubtless look for a very agreeable letter; but I much fear you will be disappointed; for in truth I know nothing to send you. If I was to entertain you with my own thoughts, I should talk of nothing but you, and you are too near hand to the subject, for that to be agreeable. I came here last Sunday pretty late in the evening: *Monf. de Chaulnes*, by way of joke, had sent his guards for me, with a note to let me know, that I was required on his Majesty's service; and that *Mad. de Chaulnes* would expect me to supper: Accordingly I came, and found a great many new faces; so much the worse. Monday *Monf. d'Harrouis* gave a dinner to *M. and Mad. de Chaulnes*, and all the principal magistrates and commissioners. I was there, and the Abbe came to us, under pretence of seeing what repairs I wanted to have done to my Tower of *Sevigne*; however, he never looked at it. It was one of the finest entertainments of the kind I ever saw in my life. But now hear what a misfortune we had: As we were getting into the coach to go, *Monf. de Chaulnes* was taken with a shivering and fainting: In a word, it was an attack of a fever. *Mad. de Chaulnes* in great affliction shut herself up with him; and *Mad. de Murinais* and myself supplied their places. *Monf. d'Harrouis* was very much concerned, every body was dull, and nothing was thought of but this unlucky accident. In the evening the fever quitted him; but I believe he has it now again, and that it is a fit of a tertian. This is the way disorders come: Pray take care of yourself. If you was in any other condition,

condition, I should desire you to walk ; but not a word of that now. I am persuaded that the greatest part of our disorders arise from want of exercise. Pomenars sends you ten thousand compliments. He was saying, that the other day at Rennes, a good woman, who had heard of a *media noche*, being just returned from a visit at about four o'clock in the afternoon, said, that she had been at a *media noche* with the first president's lady. This is well enough for a foolish creature that has a mind to give herself fashionable airs. This is all I shall say to you from hence. Perhaps I may find something to add in finishing my packet. I want to tell you of a ball we had last night, which, setting apart the grand balls we have seen, was as pretty as any thing could be. Several beauties of Lower Brittany shone away there ; and among the rest Mad. de L***, who is a very fine girl, and dances extremely well. She had her humble servant with her, whom it is said she is to marry : He stood behind her. But Monf. de Rohan, who has thought her very handsome ever since last year, hung himself at her ear in such a strange manner, and she at every turn was running her nose in his face to whisper to him again, that the lover quitted his place. The young lady did not seem the least affected with it. The mother gave her some winks ; but it was all one : In short, she seemed running mad after a title, which afforded us all infinite diversion. But is it possible that M. de Grignan should refuse me the pleasure of seeing you dance for a few moments only ? What must I never more see thee dance, that graceful air that used to find the way so directly to my heart ? I see it here indeed in detached parts ; but then I want to see the whole together. I am ready to die sometimes, for want of giving vent to my tears, at a ball that reminds me of you : And sometimes I do enjoy myself unobserved. There are some certain airs and dances that very frequently produce that effect with me. My little Lomaria has always a charming air ; but last night I thought he was a little in liquor. We say this here without giving offence to any one.

LETTERS OF THE
LETTER LXXXV.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 30 August, 1671.

INDEED, my dear child, it is now beyond all doubt, that I lose one of your letters every week, or at least every other; for you must be six days without writing to me, if I have but one letter a week; and I am sure that is not the case. For example now, I have lost an excellent good one this very post; for I have only received that which you wrote when overwhelmed with your Provencals. I am very much vexed at these blunders. If you write down your date, you will presently perceive this disorder. Another vexation is, that I begin all my letters with this foolish head: A fine beginning, and very agreeable truly!

But now about your blood: You say it is not heated: I am glad of it for one reason, and I am sorry for it for another, which is, that there is less relief for your disorder; and that you must change places with the fogs, and get that over your head which is now under your feet*. I cannot well see how you will remedy this inconvenience: I know one method, however, which I hope to make serviceable to you when I come to Provence. It is a great pity that your fine complexion cannot bear the air of Provence. I remember that once the air of Nantes, with a little of the sea air too, entirely took away mine. But, my dear child, it is the air of the isle of France that is excellent: That of Vitre kills every one. The night dews in our park quite destroy me: I that used, you know, to stand all those at Livri, without ever being affected by them. M. de Chaulnes is much better. They all go away in about six days time. The company is very polite and agreeable; but yet they will be heartily glad to be separated. I came here a Friday just to look at my Abbe, La Mouffe, and my woods. To-day I expect M. de Rennes, and three other Bishops, to dinner; I shall give them a piece of salt beef. After dinner Mad. de Chaulnes will come and carry me back in her coach to Vitre, to take my leave of their worships: Mons. de Boucherat,

* On account of the elevated situation of the castle of Grignan.

Boucherat, the chief president, and a whole coach full of magistracy, are to come likewise. As they will take me away with them, and I shall have no time to seal my letters, I do it this morning. The contract our province has made with the King was signed last Friday; but before that they made a present of 2000 Louis d'Ors to Mad. de Chaulnes, besides several other presents: Not that we are very rich here, you must know; but we have courage: We are honest hearts, and between twelve and one o'clock at noon we can never refuse any thing to our friends. It is the lucky minute: The effluvia of your orange groves do not produce such fine effects. I do not know how your health may stand at present; but it is drank here every day by upwards of a hundred gentlemen that never saw you in their lives, nor in all probability ever will. It is not those who have really seen you that drink your health the most. Lavardin and des Chapelles have filled up some *bouts rimes* I gave them; they are very pretty, and I will send them to you. You will also be pleased to hear, that M. de *Bruquenvvert* danced a very good jig with Mad. de *Kerikinili*: These are of the number of things which you ought not to be ignorant of. I desire that you will not for the future attack me on the head of names, you see I am very strong in them. The grandeur of a province appears here in all its lustre, insomuch that the other day M. de Grignan's post was admired and envied by every one, for being entirely to himself: To be alone is a thing that charms M. de Molac, who is oppressed with the presence of M. de Lavardin, M. de Lavardin by that of M. de Chaulnes, and the King's Lieutenants by the Lieutenants General. They had a mind too, while the humour of making presents prevailed, to propose to the states the passing a free gift of 10000 crowns for M. and Mad de Grignan: M. de Chaulnes maintained that they would hearken to the proposal; others, that they would actually make the present: In short, we all agreed to have it buzzed about, and set some of the Low Bretons a murmuring, then soften them down at table, and make them promise to propose it. But what do you say of M. de Coulanges coming to see you? The sweet man! how happy

happy he is! I fancy, my dear, you would be glad to see him *skipping* about your castle; his gaiety would inspire you with the like: He will tell you how handsome your daughter grows. The most that I desire and wish for is, that you may be well, and that for my sake you will be very studious of your health and preservation.

The philosophic and tranquil situation of your mind does, in my opinion, set you more above the fogs and gross vapours, than that of your castle of Grignan: You have in reality the clouds under your feet, and appear mounted in the middle region: And you will never hinder me from believing that those fine names, which you will say you give to natural qualities, are all the effect of your own reason and the strength of your understanding. God preserve you in this just way of thinking; it will be far from being useless to you. However, you ought to keep yourself in action, that your philosophy may not turn to indolence; and that you may once more be in a condition to see a country where the clouds will be over your head. Methinks I see you wrapped up in all that indolence which arises from supposed impossibilities: However, do not indulge this farther than is absolutely necessary for your repose; and not so as to deprive you of action and courage. I sincerely pity you in having women, you know how I hate them: And yet your statues of men on pedestals are very tiresome: You will make me prefer the drolleries and amusements of our Bretons to the perfumed indolence of your Provençals. But have you no sprightly wits, no lively geniuses, no hot-headed hasty sparks, whose imaginations take fire by being so near the sun? At least you cannot be without fools, and in the crowd of them you might find some one that would divert you: But Provence, and its Provençals too, are beyond my comprehension. I understand my own Bretons much better! If I was to name you all those that send you their compliments, it would make a volume. There are M. and Mad. de Chaulnes, M. de Lavardin, the Count des Chapelles, Tonquedec, the Abbe de Montigni, Bishop of Leon, d'Harrouis, Fourche, Chèfieres, &c. not to mention my Abbe, who has not yet
received

received your last letter ; and our Mousse, who is still in expectation of what you are composing. As for me, my dear child, not to make two businesses of one, I desire you will embrace all your amiable Grignans at once for me. I have seen sleeves like those of your Chevalier. Ah ! what a charming figure they make dancing in a mess of soup, or sweeping over a salad ! Farewell, my ever lovely, and ever infinitely dear child : I shall say nothing about the love I have for you, for I have none at all.

L E T T E R LXXXVI.

To the Same.

Vitre, Wednesday 2 Sept. 1671.

HERE is a letter that comes to me directly from Paris, without passing thro' the hands of du Bois * ; and what is more, according to your date, I receive it just five days after you wrote it ; so that it is all together a miraculous letter. But there is no need of working miracles to render your letters dear to me. The remembrance of you is not to be banished by any consideration ; but itself banishes all others. Our flutes may sing, and dance, and drink as long as they please, your dear idea makes its way thro' all, and fixes itself in my heart, as on its proper throne. I dare not go any more to the Rocks ; the way there is now too well known : Sunday there were five coaches and six there. I am dying for my dear solitude. It is very much admired ; Combourg is not near so fine. But you must not think our houses in Brittany are like Grignan, there is a wide difference. As to Monsieur Lomaria, without mincing the matter, he has all the air of a little Mercury : In his dancing, his bow, his manner of pulling off and putting on his hat, his shape, his face, in short, the little rogue is absolutely pretty. The *MurINETTE* beauty would have him with all her heart ; but he has not the same inclination for her. The Count des Chapelles is charmed with what you say of him in my letter. Pomenars sends you word, that he is now bolder than ever, for he is sure he shall never be hanged,

* The Post-master charged with the care of Mad. de Sevigne's letters, to send them to her the speediest way to Brittany.

hanged, as he has 'scaped it this bout. The Abbe comes and dines with us sometimes, and La Mouffe with him, who does not seem in the least embarrassed with all these doings: I have set him upon such a good footing with M. and Mad. de Chaulnes, M. Boucherat, and with the Bishop of Leon, that he is received by them all just like myself. He talks about the lesser parts with the Bishop, who is as violent a Cartesian as himself, and they maintain the faculty of thinking in brutes; these are just my gentleman's notions, and he argues very learnedly upon it: He is as far gone in this philosophy as a man well can be, and the Prince has given into it likewise. I am vastly delighted with their arguments. I hear that our dear little one is very pretty; I shall divert myself with her mightily at home this winter. Farewel, my dearest! I embrace you; but, good God! what will be the joy of my heart when I hear the sound of your voice? I flatter myself that day will come, as well as so many others that one does not wish for.

LETTER LXXXVII.

To the Same.

Vitre, Sunday 6 September, 1671.

A LAS! my dear child, what can be the reason of so many fires about you, to put you in continual frights and fears? To tell you the truth, I wish it may not be of some prejudice to you; only remember what happened to you once, from the fright of seeing the Chevalier on horseback: I hope at least it will be a caution to you, to make your people take great care that no accident of fire happens in your own house. I beg Deville, by the affection he has for you, to make his rounds more exactly than ever. So you think that a cold is of no consequence to you in your present condition; but you may take my word for it that it is, and perhaps you may not get rid of it till you lie in. Above all things be prudent and careful of yourself in your seventh month: One generally goes one's time very well with girls; but the boys have sometimes a notion of coming sooner, and step into the world at the end of the seventh month. Consider well what I say

to you, Mad. du Puidu Fou herself could not have said any thing better. After this *matronly* lesson, I shall make you a thousand compliments from de Chesieres. You have a whole tribe of the Grignans with you; but they are all such agreeable people, that I am rejoiced you have their company. I am surprised to hear, that you have M. de Chate with you. It is certain that I was three days with him at Sevigni, and thought him a very good kind of a man; I thought I saw some faint resemblance in him of a certain person, which made me not like him the worse. If he tells you what happened to me at Sevigni, he will tell you, that I was quite fore with hunting the stag with Mad de Sulli, who is at present Mad. de Verneuil. You think you tell me nothing, when you say that you love those who talk of me to you: it is so very natural a proof of your affection, that I am resolved to thank you for it, and so embrace you with all my heart. There are also certain marks of aversion which carry death with them: I am too well read in this subject; but I must own that I have paid dearly for my experience. What think you of Marillac's being made a Duke? I greatly approve of what his father has done; it was the only way to make him enjoy the dignity without feeling the grief that must have accompanied it, for the loss of such a father: I think too the very name of M. Rochefoucault, added to his merit, carries with it a dignity far superior to that he has given. La Marans had a mind to go to Livri the other day with Mad. de la Fayette, but they sent her back without any further ceremony. She was telling them, that the other day she had had the Prince at her house; but nobody seemed to listen to what she said. What a mortification must that be to a woman of her vanity! When I come towards the conclusion of my letter, I will tell you something about the states.

The best company must part, said M. de Chaulnes, on dismissing the states. The assembly broke up about midnight. I was present with Mad. de Chaulnes and other ladies: It is a very fine, grand, and magnificent assembly. M. de Chaulnes spoke to every thing with a great deal of dignity, and in terms very agreeable to the subject of his discourse. After dinner every one

is to go his own way. I am rejoiced with the thoughts of getting back to my Rocks. I have had an opportunity of obliging several persons: I have made a deputy and a pensionary: I have spoke for several unhappy wretches, but not a word for myself; for I have no notion of asking without reason. I must tell you of a droll mistake of mine. You know how apt I am to make blunders. I was at M. de Chaulnes's the other day before dinner, and I saw a man standing at the farther end of the room, whom I took for the *maitre d'hôtel*; upon which I went to him, and said, "Dear sir, do let us have dinner; it is almost one o'clock, and I am ready to die with hunger." "Madam," says the man, looking very gravely at me, "I should think myself extremely happy to offer you a dinner at my house; my name is Picaudiere: I live but about two leagues from Landernau." My dear child, this was a gentleman of Lower Brittany all the while; a thing which no one will take upon them to contradict. I cannot help laughing while I tell it you. I have sent you a piece from M. de Chaulnes: I take it to be one of Pelisson's: Some say it is Despreaux's. Let me know what you think of it. In my opinion it is a finished piece: Read it with attention, and you will find it full of wit. Our states have granted 100000 crowns in gratifications, 2000 pistoles to M. de Lavardin, as much to M. de Molac, to Boucherat, the first President, the King's Lieutenants, &c. 2000 crowns to the Count des Chapelles, as much to the young Coetlogon, and, in short, have been munificence itself. Here is a province for you!

Mad. de la Fayette is at Livri, from whence she writes me the merriest letters that can be, notwithstanding all her disorders: M. de la R. F. writes to me too: They both tell me they wish for me with them; but it is I that truly wish to see you there, the hope of which is the whole support of my life. You must know that I have computed you will have finished the translation of Petrarch in about fifty years, allowing you to do a sonnet a month. It is a work highly worthy of you, and will not be a crude performance. Farewell, my dearest child, I am going back to my Rocks, so contented

tended with being rid of all this bustle; that I am almost ashamed of being so easy in your absence. I am often tempted to burn my letters when I read them over, and see what trifling stuff I write to you. But tell me truly, Do they not exhaust your patience? for I can very well shorten them without diminishing the least particle of my love.

L E T T E R LXXXVIII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 9 Sept. 1671.

HERE am I at length quite calm and at my ease in my solitude. I have had some few remains of the states here. M. de Lavardin † stays behind at Vitre to make his entry into Rennes. He is now Chief Governor since the departure of M. de Chaulnes, by whose presence he is no longer oppressed; so that trumpets, kettle-drums, and guards are all drawn forth. He came in that manner to pay me a visit, with a retinue of twenty gentlemen: The whole together looked like a little army. Among these were the Lomarias, the Coetlogons, the Abbes de Feuqueires, and several that have no less an opinion of themselves than the rest. We walked, had a slight collation; and des Chappelles, whom I brought with me from Vitre, assisted me in doing the honours of the house. Here he is still, and looks very much as if he had an inclination to let you know himself how much we talk of you, and how every thing brings you afresh to our remembrance. We experience more than ever, that the heart is the seat of memory; for when it does not come from that quarter, we have no more than so many hares. We have found a little part of the wood, where, amongst several other pretty things you had wrote, we saw this, *Gods, how I love tigerism* †! This is the whole business of wits! But we desire to know whether this virtue of yours does not lie dormant for want of being

† Lieutenant-General of the government of Upper and Lower Brittany.

† La tigrerie. This is a word of Mad. de Sevigne's making, and signifies malice or cruelty.

ing put in practice ; for we do not well see on whom you can exercise it, which gives us some hopes that you will soon drop your acquaintance with it.

Mons. DES CHAPELLES.

It would be something extraordinary, Madam, if you should find less employment for this virtue where you are, than at the time you wrote this fine sentiment. I remember that I was at that time yellow and half dead, and you was charming and in high spirits ; consequently you could have no reason at that time to amuse yourself with this exercise. It would be much better to remind you of another device which I found pretty near the former, and wrote much about the same time : *Meglio morir in presenza que viver in assenza* †. I am still so pleased with this, that I believe I shall make it strictly true, and never depart from the Rocks twice in my life without being ready to die with regret. But, methinks, if one must die, it would have been better to have died at first ; for all lovely and charming as you are, no one has yet died in honour of you ; and if I had had the wit to have done it then, it might have rendered both our names illustrious in the annals of love. But you know, Madam, what is not done at one time, may be done at another. And I am of opinion, that provided one can divest our Marchioness of the part she pretends to have in it, that it would be more extraordinary to die upon this latter occasion ; for then it may be said, that the memory is in the heart, or the heart is in the memory. Take your choice : though I greatly fear you experience neither the one nor the other. As for my part, since I find you will not take the pains of giving me an answer, I am more afflicted than offended ; for I should have taken an infinite pleasure in once more beholding a writing for which I have still so great a taste, though it was never yet employed to shew the least marks of friendship or regard to me : But what am I doing ? Reproaches to a *tigress* is like pearls thrown before swine. M. de Lavardin has just honoured the Rocks with his presence, accompanied with a great number of the gentry : He was received with the greatest politeness imaginable,

† It is better to die in her presence, than live absent from her.

ginable, and found a very noble and genteel collation ready for him in the wood ; after which we saw him set off surrounded by all his guards. So ends the history, and so ends my letter : May it have been agreeable to you ! I cannot get rid of the dull and melancholy humour I have been thrown into, by the remembrance of having so often seen you in this very place.

Mud. DE SEVIGNE.

I have taken the pen from him, for he would never have done : He was so lost in the affecting remembrance of having seen you here, that M. Lavardin found us both downright melancholy about it, which gave us a culpable appearance, and looked as if we were tired of our company ; and, indeed, so we were : For we had business in Provence when they came in : or, more properly speaking, our business lay here ; for it was the remembrance of having seen you here, that caused our concern for not seeing you any longer. As for me, I cannot reconcile myself to have my daughter taken away from me by force, and carried at such a distance from me ; and I really believe I should sink every moment under the thoughts, were it not for the esteem and regard I have for M de Grignan, and for all the Grignans in general, and, I may add, for the persuasion that I have of their tenderness for you.

LETTER LXXXIX.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 13 Sept. 1671.

THE fright you have had, which has obliged you to keep your bed, has afflicted me more, my dear child, than it has done you. I am persuaded that nothing can be more detrimental to you than these surprises : It was the only cause of your misfortune at *Livri* * ; and if it was the same Chevalier upon the same horse, he should receive his death from no other hand than mine. Indeed you ought to have let me know what occasioned this fright. Consider, I must now live eight whole days without knowing what your prudence might have produced. Our Coadjutor has wrote me

* A miscarriage which is mentioned in Letter LXXXIII.

me some wonderful things ; but I am not at present in a humour to answer them. My right-hand is more affected by the pain of my mind, than by the gout in my left-hand, notwithstanding the very clear and demonstrative manner in which he has explained to me the relation there is between the one and the other. I was almost tempted, after all his reasoning, to make him the same answer as the Doctor in Moliere's *Medecin malgré lui* does to a person, who was talking much in the same manner to him, *That is just the reason of your daughter's being dumb.* I saw this comedy very well played by a company of strollers the other day, at Vitre : Every one was ready to die with laughing. Your remark on *La Marquette* is extremely just : She is of an amiable disposition, and that blunt hasty way of hers is tempered with such excellent sentiments, that it is impossible it should displease. I am going to send your two Letters to Harrouis and the Count des Chapelles to Nantes : The latter of these lived only in the hopes of it ; as to d'Harrouis*, you must know that he had engaged to the states to pay a hundred francs more than he had in his hands, but did not think it a thing worth speaking of. One of his friends found it out, and every creature was in arms till he had justice done him : He is adored by every one, and not without reason. One morning our states took in their heads to grant gratifications to the amount of 100,000 crowns, upon which a gentleman of Lower Brittany humourously said to me, that he fancied the states were going to die soon, by making their wills, and disposing of all their effects in this manner. I wish to God they were as liberal in proportion in Provence. I am very fond of our Bretons ; they smell a little strong of wine indeed, but your orange-flower gentry have not half such honest hearts. I must here except one, three, four, five or six of our Grignans, whom I love and esteem, and honour each according to his particular rank and dignity. You have fruits there which I devour in imagination ; I hope to eat some of them the next year, if I live so long. What a satisfaction then will be mine, my dearest child ! and however cruel

* He was Treasurer to the states of Brittany.

el time has been to me in some other respects, I cannot but love it, when I think on the blessings it is every day bringing me. Preserve your health, your beauty, and your affection, that nothing may be wanting to my joy. How great do you think must be that of *Monf. d'Andilli* to see *M. de Pomponne* become Minister and Secretary of State *? Indeed the King merits great applause for having made so excellent a choice: He was in Sweden when his Majesty thought of him, and gave him the post which was *Monf. de Lionne's*, and at the same time made him a present of the necessary expences attending the entrance into his new office. What great things will he not do in this place! and what satisfaction will it be to all who are his friends! You know how great a share of pleasure I shall take in it; and I do not know whether I may not be tempted to write an ode in praise of his Majesty for his choice. Would not a word or two of congratulation to the father and son on this occasion come extremely well from you, who are so much beloved by the family? But, my dear, you must take care of yourself, lest this ugly fright should have disturbed any thing. I think you are now in your seventh month. I tremble for you, and the more as it is a boy; at least, such you have promised me it shall be; do not go now by your negligence to let it turn to a girl. I own to you, that I shall have great emotions at opening your Friday's packet; but my emotions are seldom attended with any great consequence; a glass of water sets all to rights again. You seem to have a taste for *Nicole*. I do not know where to look for another book of morality to fortify your heart; and so must refer you to our friends the ancients. I am told that *M. de Condom* has lately published one §, wherein he assures us, that provided we have a firm belief in the holy mysteries, it is sufficient; and greatly condemns all the sophistries about the Lord's Supper, which he says, are but the sources of so many heresies. They say nothing can be better wrote. This is just the thing you

* *M. de Pomponne* was Ambassador in Sweden at the time he was made Secretary of State for foreign affairs.

§ An exposition of faith.

you want. La Mouffe is already preparing his answer to that fine piece you are composing. Surely you are mocking me when you talk of my liberal presents: It is to make me ashamed of myself? Alas, my dear, what trash in comparison of what I would bestow! I am delighted whenever I think of M. Pomponne; and that I may perhaps be able to do you some services through him: But you want nothing but M. de Grignan and yourself. However, we could not have wished any one the place, who is more truly our friend. M. de Coulanges, who is going to see you, will tell you in what a pretty manner the King conferred this favour.

LETTER XC.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday Sept. 16, 1671.

I AM wicked to-day, my child. I am just as when you used to tell me *you are wicked*. I am very dull and out of humour: I have heard nothing from you: *Great friendships are never at ease*: A MAXIM. It rains; we are alone: In short, I wish you a pleasanter day than I am likely to have. What greatly perplexes the Abbe, La Mouffe, and the rest of my folks, is, that there is no remedy for my uneasiness. I would have it be Friday, in order to have a letter from you, and it is but Wednesday. This puzzles them: They do not know what to do for me in this case; for if, in excess of their friendship, and to please me, they should assure me it was Friday, that would be still worse; for if I had not a letter from you on that day, I should be lost to all reason. I am obliged to have patience; though patience, you know, is a virtue that I am by no means fond of practising; but I shall be easy in three days time. I am very anxious to know how you are after your fright. Well! frights are of all things my aversion; for though I am not with child, they make me become so, that is, they put me in such a condition as entirely destroys my health. However, my uneasiness is not at present so great as that comes to; for I am persuaded you have been prudent enough to keep your bed;

bed; and that that will have set all matters right again. Do not tell me that you will not let me know any thing about your health, that will make me desperate. I shall no longer have any confidence in what you say, and so be perpetually in the way I am in at present. Well, certainly, we are at a fine distance from each other, and if either of us had any thing upon our spirits that required immediate relief, one would have all imaginable leisure to hang one's self.

I thought it necessary yesterday to take a small dose of *morality*, and I found myself a great deal the better of it, and yet more so for a little piece of criticism on the *Berenice* of M. Racine, which I thought very diverting and ingenious. It is wrote by the author* of the *Sylphs*, *Gnomes*, and *Salamanders*. There are a few words which are not quite so good as they should be, and even unbecoming a man who knows the world; these hurt one; but, as they occur only here and there, they ought not to disgust one against the whole, which I assure you upon examination I thought a very pretty turned criticism. As I fancied this little thing would have diverted you, I heartily wished for you by my side in the closet, provided you could have returned again as soon as you had read it: And yet I own I should have felt some pain in letting you go so soon: I know too well what the last parting cost me. I hope this letter will find you chearful; if so, I beg of you to burn it directly; for it would be very extraordinary if it should be agreeable to you, considering the horrid humour I write it in. It is very happy for the Coadjutor that I do not answer his letter to-day. I have a great inclination to ask twenty or thirty questions by way of finishing, in a manner worthy of this performance. Have you many grapes? You tell me only of figs. Have you very hot weather? You do not say a word about that. Have you such charming cattle as we have at Paris? Have you had your aunt d'Harcourt with you a long time? You may think, that having lost so many of your letters, I am quite ignorant how matters stand, and have entire-

* The Abbe Villars, author of the *Count de Gabalis*.

ly lost the thread of your discourse. Ah! how I long to beat somebody! And how obliged I should think myself to any Breton, that would come and say something very silly to me to put me in a passion! You told me the other day, that you was glad I was returned to my solitude, and should think of you. Very pretty that! As if I did not think sufficiently of you in every other place. Farewell, my dear, this is the best part of my letter. I finish, because you must know I think I rave a little or so: After all one must preserve one's credit.

L E T T E R X C I.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 20 Sept. 1671.

IT was not without reason, my dear, that you was concerned at the illness of the poor Chevalier de Buons: It was something very extraordinary. I have taken a liking to that young fellow ever since I saw him at Paris, which makes me the more ready to believe the good things you say of him. But what I think the most extraordinary is, the violent fear he is in of death. His situation, such as you describe it to me, furnishes an admirable subject for reflection. It is certain, that at that awful period we must have a great deal to trust to: This will occasion all our despair, and all our uneasiness; and we shall then stand in need of that time which we now wish to pass so sweetly away: and willingly give up every thing, for one of those days which we now let slip with such indifference. Such are my meditations in the mall you are so well acquainted with. The Christian system of morality is an excellent remedy against all evils; but then I would have it truly Christian, otherwise it is empty and unprofitable. La Mouffe thinks I reason pretty well on this subject at times; but then a breath of air, or the dancing of a sun-beam, dissipates the reflections of the night. We sometimes discourse together on the opinion of Origen and our own; and you would have no easy task to persuade us to the belief of an eternity of punishments, unless we should call in submission to its aid.

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I am very glad that you are pleased with the examination *: Though I am not so well skilled in these matters as yourself, I made shift to understand it *per discrezione*, and thought it an excellent piece. La Mouffe is very proud of having made such an excellent scholar of you. I am sorry for your leaving Grignan: You had good company there, a fine house, a charming prospect, and wholesome air: Instead of which you are going to be crammed up in a little close town †, where, in all probability, there may be many disorders, and a very bad air, and then poor Coulanges will not meet with you; I really pity him: In short, I think it is not his fortune to see you at Grignan; perhaps you may carry him to the states with you; but that will be very different, and you will certainly find this journey very disagreeable in the condition you are in, and at this time of the year. When you are there, you will see what comes of M. de Marseilles's protestations; as for me, I think them very deceitful, and greatly confined. The assurances of friendship I have sent him on my side, are nearly in the same style; he promises you his service conditionally; and I assure him of my friendship upon condition too, in telling him, that I make not the least doubt of your always finding fresh subject of obligation to him.

M. de Lavardin came directly hither from Rennes last Thursday night; he gave me a full account of his magnificent reception there: He took the oaths to the parliament, and made a very handsome speech on the occasion. I carried him back to Vitre the next morning, to resume his own carriage, and make the best of his way to Paris.

The Bishop of Leon has been at the last extremity at Vitre, with a delirium, which rendered him very little different from *Marphise* §; he is now out of dan-

* Examination of Aristotle's Philosophy against Reason. See the *Menagiana*, vol. IV. page 271, the Paris edit. 1715.

† Lambese, a small town in Provence, the seat of the Assembly of the States of the province.

§ Mad. de Sevigne's little bitch, which according to Descartes, for whose opinion the Bishop was a great stickler, was no more than a mere machine.

ger. I shall stay here till the end of November, and then I shall go and fetch my *little heart*, and carry her home with me; and in the spring to Provence, if God spares our lives. The Abbe wishes it, only to go with me to see you, and bring you back with us; for by that time you will have been a great time in Provence. Indeed, we should never build too much upon any thing, for we hourly meet with disappointments in great matters as well as small. But what can one do? One must have this treatise of morality always in one's hand, like a smelling bottle to one's nose, to keep one from fainting. I declare to you, my dear child, that I suffer a great deal from this heart of mine: I have a thousand times better bargain of my wit and humour.

I think it admirable in you to talk of drawing pictures of me, that even you yourself are surpris'd at their beauty! Do you know that you are going to make me as mean as mean can be, by thus comparing me by your exaggerated notions? This may perhaps, favour a little of begging a compliment; but it is true nevertheless, so no more of that. I laugh'd heartily at that *Carpentras**, that you always lock up, when you have any thing to do, persuading him that he wants his *siesta*†. The description of your ladies, with their tinsel dresses, is excellent: But what horrid faces! I never met with such any where. How pleasing and lovely does yours appear, in your plain and decent dress! Ah! would I could behold it, and cover it with my kisses. For heaven's sake, child, take care of yourself, and above all things avoid frights. I do not at all approve of this journey of yours, just at this time. I beseech Heaven to raise the poor Chevalier de Buons. My service to the good-for-nothings. You could not have given me a smaller idea of the place I hold in M. de Grignan's heart, than in telling me, that it is all that remains unoccupied by you. One must be of a very easy disposition to be satisfied with this. Do you know that the King has received M. d'Andilli just in the same manner as you or I should have done? Bravo! Let

* The Bishop of Carpentras, a very troublesome man.

† An afternoon nap, a constant custom in all hot countries.

MARCHIONESS DE SEVIGNE. 195

Let us now leave M. de Pomponne to establish himself in his glorious place.

L E T T E R XCII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 23 Sept. 1671.

HERE are we again, my dear child, in the midst of the most horrid weather that you can imagine. It has been one continued storm for these four days past. All our walks are under water; there is no such thing as walking now. Our masons and carpenters keep close within doors: In short, I detest this country, and am every moment wishing for your sun-shine, while you, perhaps, wish as much for my rain. We are both of us in the right.

There is the poor Abbe of Montigni, Bishop of Leon, at Vitre, who sets out, I believe, this day for a far more pleasant country than this: In a word, after having five or six times bandied between life and death, an increase of the fever has at length decided in favour of the latter: He is under no concern about it, for he is quite light-headed; but it is a great shock to his brother the Advocate-General*. We weep together very often, for I constantly visit him, and am indeed his only comfort: It is on occasions like these that one should exert one's self. I am at present reading in my chamber, without daring to shew my nose without the door: My heart, however, is at ease, in the belief that you are well, and that makes me proof against tempests; for we have nothing else here: Was it not for this short repose in which I indulge my heart, I should not very patiently put up with the affront I have received from this September: It is downright treachery at this time of the year, and in the midst of all one's workmen. Oh! I should make a fine to do!

Quos ego.

I still go on with M. Nicole; I have not yet met with any lessons against rain; but expect to meet with some every page, for I find every thing that I want in him; and that conformity to the will of God, which he so admirably inculcates, might be sufficient to make one easy on this head, did I not stand in need of a spe-

* To the Parliament of Rennes.

cific medicine: In short, I think it a most excellent book: No one has as yet come up to these authors, for I give Pascal credit for half of the fine things in it. One is so fond of hearing one's self spoke of, that, be it good or ill, it is still pleasing. I have even forgiven him his *puffing up* of the heart, in consideration of the rest; and I maintain that there could not be a more apt expression to describe the pride and vanity of the human heart, which is nothing more than wind: See if you can find a better word, and in the mean while I will finish my perusal of it. We are likewise reading the history of France, since the time of King John: While we can get books, we are in no danger of hanging ourselves. You may easily suppose, that as long as I hold in this humour, I cannot fail of being very acceptable to La Mousse. For our devotions, we have that collection of letters of M. de St. Cyran, that M. Andilli will send you, and which you will find most admirable. This is all, my dear child, that so true a recluse as I am, have to say to you.

I am told that Mad. de Vernueil is very ill. The King talked a whole hour with the good old Andilli in as free, gracious, and agreeable a manner as could possibly be: It was no difficult thing to convince the good old man of his excellent parts, and beget his just admiration of them: He expressed a great deal of pleasure in having made choice of Mons. de Pomponne, adding, that he expected his arrival with impatience, and should take the care of his fortune upon himself, as he knew he was not very rich. He told the good man, that it was a downright piece of vanity in him to mention in the preface to his Joseph, that he was eighty years old; it was a perfect sin: In short, they were very gay, and several smart things passed on the occasion. His Majesty said moreover, that he must not expect he would suffer him to remain shut up in his desert, for that he would very frequently send for him to court, where he should be glad to see him as a person who had rendered himself illustrious in every respect. When the good old man was about to assure him of his fidelity and attachment, the King replied, that

that he had not the least doubt of it, for he who served his God well, could not fail of serving his King well also: In short, it was a most extraordinary interview. His Majesty took care to have his dinner sent from his own table; and ordered one of his own coaches to carry him an airing. He talked of him a whole day together with the greatest admiration. As for M. d'Andilli, he was so transported, that he cried out every moment, I must humble myself! finding how much he stood in need of it. You may think the pleasure this has given me, by the interest I have in it. I wish my Letters may give you as much pleasure as yours give me.

LETTER XCIII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 27 Sept. 1671.

WELL, my dear child, be it so, we will talk no more of the miscarriage of our Letters; it is, without doubt, a disagreeable and tiresome subject on all accounts; and I shall be more readily silent on that head, as I have, thank God, for this month past, received them as regularly as I could desire; and you may write a little more freely to me than to him who has hitherto taken them, and whom you always think you are conversing with when you write to me: However, you are very ready to let him see that you love me; you conceal nothing of that, and seem to speak of it as a thing that you would have all the world know. What you say to me on that head warms my heart; yes, I own that I believe you, and that this belief is the greatest joy and comfort of my life, and the ultimate point of all my wishes: It is true it comes allayed with some bitterness; but that is an unavoidable consequence, and when one suffers from tenderness and affection, one is more disposed to have patience. I always make this chapter as short as I can; but I assure you I should never end it if I did not take great pains to do it.

I am charmed to find that you have so amiable a sister-in-law, to serve as a companion and comfort to you. It is a thing I am every day wishing you, for no

one in the world has more need of an agreeable companion than yourself; otherwise you harass your mind in such a manner as would destroy you: You do not amuse yourself with trifles; but if left to yourself your meditations are of the deepest and most melancholy kind. It is impossible to be more contented than I am with the praise you bestow on this amiable sister-in-law of yours: I suppose it is Mad. de Rochebonne, who takes very much after the Coadjutor, with all his wit, humour and pleasantry. If you will make her my compliments beforehand, I shall be obliged to you.

M. de Pomponne is now in a situation to be envied. You wrote very agreeably upon that subject. I am going myself to write to the good old man ¶. I have already told you all I know about this affair. He has wrote to me twice since his favourable reception by the King, and I have answered him each time. He tells me there is nothing he esteems so much as my friendship; and to see that my approbation has had the start by twenty years of those which will shortly be given to his son; and those twenty years several of them very hard to be borne with: In short, this is a most miraculous change; it is a pleasure to be spectator of it. Here has another too happened in the Count de Guiche, who is returned from banishment; but I am taking d'Hacqueville's business out of his hands, who has been this fortnight by the Marshal's * (*de Gramont*) bedside, and has, without doubt, told you every thing, and of the visit the King made him five or six days ago. I fancy it will not be long before Vardes receives the same grace as the Count. I think their misfortunes are pretty much alike †; but I must learn from you what is thought of this affair in your country. Here is a letter I have wrote to your Bishop, read it; you will judge better than I, if it is to the purpose: I think it not bad; but I am not the proper judge. You know I write off hand, so that my Letters are very loose; but
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¶ Monfr. d'Andilli, father to Monfr. de Pomponne.

* The father of the Count de Guiche.

† The Count de Guiche and the Marquis de Verdes were both banished about the same time; but the latter was not recalled till the year 1682.

it is my style, and, perhaps, may have as much effect as one more studied. If I was within reach of consulting you, you are sensible what deference I should pay to your advice, and how often I have improved by it: But we are at the two farthest ends of France, so that there is nothing left for it but to see if my Letter will do or not, and accordingly to deliver it or burn it. I am of your opinion as to the dates of your Letters, my dear, and I think that it shews a giddiness to be changing every day; and if the twenty-sixth, or the sixteenth will do very well, what reason is there to change it? There is even something disobliging in it to those who recommended it to you. A man of honour and integrity tells you a thing plainly and truly as it is, and you believe him for a day; the next day another person tells you a thing quite different, and you believe him: You are always on the side of those who speak last; this is the way to create you as many enemies as there are days in the year. Do not therefore act in this manner; but keep to the twenty-sixth or to the sixteenth while you are well, and do not follow my example, and that of a bad world, to follow the times, and change with them: Keep your ground, and be assured that I am so far from desiring to subject you to my calendar, that I will very readily conform to yours: I leave the Coadjutor, or Mad. de Rochefort, to judge if I am not in the right. I want much to know if you have seen poor Coulanges; it is a cruel thing for him to have been at the pains of going so far, only just to get a sight of you, and then perhaps not to see you after all. The poor Bishop of Leon has continued in agonies ever since I wrote you word that he was dying; he grows every moment worse and worse, and will soon be in a condition to know better than you, whether matter reasons or not. The death of this poor little Bishop will be a great loss to the world. He had, as our friends say, a *bright* genius for philosophy. Much like your own: Your Letters are my life. I shall not tell you the half nor the fourth part of the affection I have for you.

LETTER XCIV.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 30 Sept. 1671.

I BELIEVE that now the *Leonic* opinion is the most certain of any. He now sees how the thing really is, and whether matter reasons or reasons not, and what kind of sub-intelligence God has given to the brute creation, and so on. You may perceive by this that I suppose him in heaven, *O che spero*: He died on Monday morning: I was then at Vitre and saw him; I wish I had not seen him: His brother seems inconsolable: I offered him my woods to give vent to his grief in; but he told me he was too deeply afflicted to seek for such a consolation. This poor Bishop was five and thirty when he died; he was finely provided for, and had one of the greatest geniuses in the world for the sciences; this was the death of him, as it was of Pascal, he quite exhausted himself with study. You are not much concerned in this long detail; but it is the news of the place, and so you must bear with it: Besides, in my opinion, death is the concern of every one, and its consequences strike directly home to us.

I read M. Nicole with a degree of pleasure that enchants me; but am particularly charmed with his third treatise, on the means of preserving peace and harmony among mankind; read it I desire you, and with attention; you will see how clearly he displays the human heart, in which every sect is alike included, Philosophists, Jansenists, Molinists, and, in short, all mankind: This is what may be truly called searching to the bottom of the heart with a lantern: He discovers to us what we perceive within ourselves every day without being able to comprehend, or having the sincerity to acknowledge: In a word, I never saw any thing wrote like it. Were it not for the amusement we find in our books, we should die just now, thro' mere want of employment. It rains without ceasing. I need say no more to make you conceive how dull our situation is. But you, who enjoy a sunshine which is so much the object of my envy, how do I pity you to be torn from
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from your Grignan, while the weather is delightful, just in the middle of autumn, and from the agreeable society of engaging company? All this you must leave to shut yourself up in a little dirty town. The very thoughts of it hurt me. Could not M. de Grignan have put off the assembly a little longer? he is the master in this respect: And poor Coulanges, what will become of him? The recluse way we live in has so turned our brains, that we make matters of consequence of every thing: Receiving and answering Letters takes up some part of our time indeed; but we have always enough left upon our hands. You make our Abbe too proud with all the kind things you say of him in your Letters. I am extremely well contented with him on your account. As for La Mousse, he catechises Sundays and Holydays; he is resolved to go to heaven. I tell him it is only out of curiosity, to see whether the sun is a heap of dust, that is continually in a great motion, or whether it is a globe of fire. The other day he had got all the little children of the place about him, and was catechising them; but after several questions they had so confounded the matter, that when he came to ask them who the Blessed Virgin was, they all set up their pipes together and answered, Creator of heaven and earth: The good man was not shaken in his belief by the children; but finding the men and women, and even the old people all in the same story, he gave into the general opinion, and began to believe it was so: In short, he did not know what he was about; and if I had not luckily come in the nick of time, he would never have been able to extricate himself. This new opinion would have certainly been productive of more disorder than that of the motion of subordinate parts. Farewell, my dear child, you see we tickle ourselves to make ourselves laugh.

LETTER XCV.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 4 October, 1671.

SO you are at last got with your assembly; I told you in my last how wrong I thought it in M. de Grignan, to contrive its meeting just at this time, to

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deprive

deprive you of the pleasures of the country, and the good company you had there with you. You have left poor Coulanges too ; he wrote to me from Lyons ; he is full of complaints at his disappointment, and thinks of nothing now but returning to Paris ; that is, to Autri, which he would never have left, but for the hopes of seeing you : All the comfort he has now left, is in talking of you to the *Chamarier* * Rochebonne, who is never silent on your perfections. If I did not think it was ridiculous to send you all the Letters I receive, I would have enclosed you his, together with one from des Chapelles : But you have the answer to it, which will be sufficient, with two others which I send you, one from M. le Camus, and the other from M. d'Harrouis. I think, that in order to give you time to read all these, I ought, in decency, to put an end to my own : But I am willing, first of all, to know, if you did not laugh at that natural absence of mine at Vitre, in desiring the gentleman of Lower Brittany to get dinner ready as soon as possible : I fancy it must have put you in mind of something nearly of the same kind, which happened to me with the man at Merci, whom I wanted to put my sleeves to rights for me, and was clerk to one of the King's Secretaries. What you observe about the sun and the moon, with regard to M. de Chaulnes and M. de Lavardin, is very good : and of yourself being always above the horizon. That is very true, child, you are never at rest, you are always in motion, and I tremble sometimes when I think on the condition you are in, and how much your spirits exceed your strength. One may go a great way tho' one is tired, as the old saying is ; but when one's legs are broke, one cannot go at all. I hope you will reflect upon this, and consult the Coadjutor about it, who is very capable of giving you proper advice ; for he is a man of excellent understanding, fine sense, and a greatness of soul worthy the name he bears ; and all these are required to decide properly in an affair of this nature. This Letter may not, perhaps, be the most agreeable one that ever was ; but, my dearest, one must sometimes give vent to what lies at one's heart, and

* An office or dignity in the chapter of St. Jean de Lyon.

and talk of things that concern one so nearly: Besides, you know, as I once said to you in a song, *Mirth is not for every hour*. Far from it, that is certain; however, take care and do not give into melancholy; think on nothing but your health, if you have any regard for mine, and be assured, that as soon as I remove at Easter, I shall think of nothing but coming to see you, and doing all that lies in my power to render your return with me feasible. What says Adhemar to the return of the Count de Guiche?

LETTER XCVI.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 7 October, 1671.

YOU know I am always a little prepossessed with my reading; so that it is for the interest of those I converse with, that I should read none but the best books. That which is uppermost with me at present is M. Nicole's *morality*: He has a treatise on the means of preserving peace among men, that delights me. Never did I see any thing so really useful, so full of fire and imagination: If you have not yet read it, I desire you will read it: If you have read it, read it over again with fresh attention; for my part, I think, all mankind in general are included in it. I am persuaded it was made for me, and hope to profit by it; at least I shall do my endeavours towards it. You know I could never bear to hear old people say, I am too old to mend: I should much sooner pardon young people for saying, I am too young. Youth is in itself so lively, that were the soul and mind to be as perfect as the body, we could not forbear adoring it; but when youth is no more, then is the time to think of making ourselves as perfect as possible, and to endeavour to make up the loss of beauty by the graces of the mind. I have long made this the subject of my meditations, and am therefore determined to work every day at my mind, my soul, my heart, and my sentiments. My mind is full of this at present, and therefore I fill my Letter with it, having nothing of much consequence besides to send you.

I suppose

I suppose you are at Lambesc; but I cannot well behold you from hence: There is a mist about my imagination, that conceals you from my sight. I had formed a castle of Grignan to myself, I saw your apartment there, I used to walk upon your terraces, and went to mass at your beautiful church; but now I am quite at a loss: I wait, with the greatest impatience, for news from your new quarters. I will not write any more to you to-day, tho' I have a great deal of time upon my hands; for I have nothing but trifles to send you, which would be an affront to the Lady-Lieutenant of a province, one who is holding the states, and, consequently, has weighty affairs upon her hands; it may do well enough when you are in your little palace of Apollo. Our Abbe and our Mousse are very much yours; and I, my dear child, need I tell you what I am, or what you are to me? The Count de Guiche is at court quite singular in his air and manner, a perfect hero of a romance, and has nothing in him like other men; at least so they tell me.

L E T T E R XCVII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 11 October, 1671.

YOU was sorry to leave Grignan; well you might: I have been almost as sorry for it as you, and felt your removal twenty leagues farther off, as I should feel a change of climate. Nothing can comfort me but the safety you will be in at Aix in regard to your health. You will lie-in just about the close of the year. My days are all employed in thinking on those I passed with you last year. Certainly no one can have made more of their time than you have done; but if, after this bout, M. de Grignan does not allow you some rest, as he would to a good piece of ground, I shall be so far from believing any thing of his affection for you, that I shall imagine, on the contrary, that he wants to get rid of you. How is it possible you can bear up against such repeated fatigues? In short, I expect this proof of his tenderness and complaisance for you. I will not have you big when I come: I shall want you to walk about with me in the fields, as you promised;

promised; and that we may eat some of those delicious grapes without being under apprehensions of the cholick. We think of nothing else but our journey; and if our Abbe can be of any service to you, he will have gained the summit of all his wishes. You wish for us with you. There wanted not all that to make us fly to you: We shall leave the Rocks the latter end of next month: Methinks that is the first step towards you. I feel a sensible joy in that thought, and that joy will be increased, when I hear that you are arrived at Aix in good health. I in no wise think it prudent to have taken this journey to Lambes: in your seventh month. But what a folly to call themselves *Monf. and Mad. de Grignan, and the Chevalier de Grignan* *, and coming to pay their compliments to you! Who are these Grignans? Why, are you not sole in your kind? Your scorpions are of a kind that give me great fear: You know, I suppose, that their bite is mortal. I am certain, as you have contrivances to guard you against the heat, you cannot be without the oil of scorpions to serve as a counter-poison upon occasion. I know Provence only by its pomegranates, its orange-trees, and its jessamine; that is the way it is described in to us: For our parts, our chesnuts are the greatest ornaments we boast. The other day I was in the midst of four or five large baskets full of them, some of which I boiled, some I roasted, and filled my pockets with them: They serve up great chargers full of them here: We walk upon them: This is Brittany in all its glory.

Monf. d'Uzez is at his abbey near Angers. He has sent an express, to let me know that he intends to make me a visit: I do not believe a word of it. He says you are an adorable creature, and are accordingly adored by all the Grignans: That, I most firmly believe: You are as much so here: No offence to any one. My uncle thinks of you just as I could wish him to do: God preserve him to us. La Mousse is very much for your letting your letter lie by: There is no forming a judgment of productions of this kind at first sight;

* They were of an ancient house settled at Salon in Provence, and bore the name of Grignan.

fight; he would therefore advise you to shew it to some of your friends, who will judge better of it than ourselves can do, and in the mean while he remains wholly yours. What shall I say to our Grignans? You are very wicked to discover all my faults to them: It is impossible to think of hiding them from you, who know them so well; but for the others, with whom I have my honour and reputation to maintain, ... Farewel, my dear child, I recommend my life to your care: You know the only way to preserve it.

L E T T E R XCVIII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 14 October, 1671.

I AM going to let you into a little secret: Do not say a word of it to any one I desire you, if you have not been told of it already. Our poor d'Hacqueville * has so hurried and worried himself about among his friends, that he is fallen sick: Some people will have it that it is the small-pox; and that he went every day to see M. de Chevreuse, who lies ill of them; but this I do not believe. The truth of the matter is this: He has had a letter sent him in an unknown hand, in which he is desired to give his attendance for an hour, at a consultation which was to be held the next morning at Cardinal de Retz's: Then they distinguish every hour of the day in the manner in which he was generally wont to employ them: He is desired to be at M. de Gramont's by five o'clock, to see a clyster given him; and to take his chariot and carry M. Brayer with him to the little Monaco's: Then he is desired to send and inquire after the several sick persons, whose names are in a list enclosed; and the writer begs of all things he will not omit being at Mad. de Clifton's in the evening, as she is extremely bad with fits of the mother: They mention his correspondence in Provence, and all the other countries in Europe, and conclude the whole with, *Dormez, dormez, vous ne scaurez mieux faire.* In short, he has shewn this letter about with such violent vexation, that I am very apprehensive of its increasing his fever.

The

* Remarkable for his great officiousness and readiness to serve his friends.

The Abbe Tetu is gone back to Tourraine, not being able to stay any longer in Paris, and for the sake of a little change: He has carried all the Richlieu affair with him in this second journey. You would certainly be very proud if you could bring yourself to believe it was upon your account that Paris became insupportable to him; but I believe you would be the only one that thought so. There is a difference in the Gramont family between the two brothers ||: Our friend d'Hacqueville is deeply engaged in it. Louvigni has not money enough to purchase his post †: I do not know whether you have heard these particulars from any other hands. I was yesterday in a little walk on the left hand of the Mall, which was very shady; I thought it mighty pretty, and immediately had this wrote upon one of the trees: *E' di mezzo l'orrore, esce' il diletto*. If Monf. de Coulanges is still with you, embrace him for me, and assure him that I am greatly pleased with him. And the poor Grignans, are they to have nothing? And you, my dear tender creature, what not one kind word for you?

LETTER XCIX.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 18 October, 1671.

I CANNOT help laughing at your notion of sending my first letter to somebody or another, that it might not be lost. It puts me in mind of a Breton lady, who desired she might have the *factum* that I gained a lawsuit by, as the infallible means of gaining her's.

You are at Lambesc then, my dear, but with your belly up to your chin. I am horridly frightened at your Provence fashion: So they make nothing, it seems, of one child at a birth: The women of that country have generally two or three at a time. I do not like your being so very big; it must at least be very troublesome to you.

Hark ye! Mr. Count, it is you I am speaking to; you shall meet with nothing but abuse from me for all your

|| The Count de Guiche and the Count de Louvigni, afterwards Duke of Gramont.

† Of Colonel of the French guards.

your civilities: You delight in your own works, and instead of having pity on my poor child, you do nothing but laugh at her. It shews, indeed, that you do not know what it is to bear children: But hear me, I have something to tell you, which is this: That if, after this boy, you do not give her a little rest, I shall not think you have the least regard for either her or me, and shall not come to Provence: Your swallows may twitter as long as they please; I shall not heed them: and more than that, I forgot to tell you, that I shall take your wife from you. Do you think I gave her to you to be killed, slain; to have her health, youth, and beauty, all destroyed at once? This is no jest: I shall ask this favour of you on my knees, in proper time and place: In the mean while admire the confidence I have in you, in threatening you with not coming to Provence. You see by this, that your friendship and words are not lost upon me. Both the Abbe and myself are persuaded you will be glad to see us. We shall bring you La Mouffe, who sends you his thanks for your kind remembrance; and provided I do not find a certain woman everlastingly with child, you shall see if we are not people of our words: In the mean time be very careful of her; and pray mind that she does not lie-in at Lambesc. My dear Count, farewell.

Now, my love, I return to you, and assure you that I greatly pity you. Pray take care and do not lie-in at Lambesc. When you are past your eighth month, you have not an hour certain. You have M. Coulanges with you now: How happy is he to behold you! He did well to take courage, and you to press him to it: Embrace him for me, and all your Grignans likewise; for there is no refraining from loving them. My aunt tells me, that your little girl pinches just as you used to do: She is very roguish: I die with desire to see her. Alas! I shall stand in great need of your black man to take me a journey through the air; that by land is horrible to think of. I am absolutely afraid of being surrounded in this place by the waters. Indeed, after seeing you set out for Provence through unfathomable depths, I may think nothing impossible. But, to return to your story, I made a jest of La Mouffe's, but I do not do so

by

by yours ; for indeed it is very well told, and so well that it made me shudder in reading it ; my heart fluttered ; indeed it is the most extraordinary thing that can be. But this *Auger* is a certain chap I have seen in my life-time, and that I shall take an opportunity of talking to, and the person that tells this so naturally can certainly be no other than a Sylph. After the promise you have made me, I do not doubt but there will be great disputes who shall bring you here. The reward is well worthy being disputed ; and if I do not see you arrive quickly, I shall fancy a war has been raised amongst them. It will be a war very justly founded ; and, if Sylphs could die, they could not perish on a more noble occasion. In short, my dear, I give you many thanks for your agreeable manner of relating this original story : It is the first of the kind that I would answer for the truth of.

There is something very droll in the pretended miracles of your hermit ; but if he believes the truth of them himself, I am much mistaken. M. de Grignan is very much in the right to give him a lecture now and then, or his vanity may lead him from the midst of his desert into the midst of hell : A fine road truly ! If he is bound no farther, he need not have been at so much pains : There are a great many roads thither. I shall be in great fear for his salvation, till I am assured by you that it is secure. I can give credit to you ; for I know that you are not to be imposed upon by false appearances. God is all-powerful ; no one doubts it : But we in no wise merit that he should make that power known to us.

I am very glad that M. de Grignan made so good a speech ; it is agreeable to himself ; others are out of the question. M. de Chaulnes spoke very well too ; a little of the heaviest, but that was not amiss in a Governor. M. Lavardin has a very happy way of speaking. I have told Corbinelli that his packet must certainly have been lost with those letters which I so regret every day. Farewell, my dear child, I am so passionately fond of you, that I hide a great part of my love, not to oppress you with it. I thank you for your cares, your affection, and your letters : My life hangs on these.

L E T-

LETTER C.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 21 October, 1671.

HOW I feel the weight of your big belly, my dear! I would have you think that you are not the only one that may be choaked, and that the interest I have in your health will make me very skilful in what relates to you. The advice I have given Deville's wife will make Mad. Moreau fancy that I must have had children: Indeed I have learned a great deal within these three years. I must own, that at first, modesty and the natural *prudishness* of a long widowhood, had left me in profound ignorance; but, when it was necessary, I became the *matron* in an instant.

Coulanges is with you still; he will have raised your spirits greatly; but when you receive this letter, you will have lost him, I suppose. I shall love him as long as I live for his courage in going so far as Lambesc to see you. I want sadly to hear something about that country. I am wearied to death with the continual repetition of the same thing over and over again from Paris, especially the marriage of MONSIEUR, I am driven just mad about that; and, what is worst of all, those who never wrote to me before, begin now, for my sins, to rouse themselves to let me know what is doing. I have just wrote to the Abbe de Pontcarre, " That I entreat him not to fill my head with any more
" of it, nor of the Palatine who is gone to fetch home
" the Princess; nor of the Marshal du Pleffis going to
" Metz to be married; nor of MONSIEUR's going to
" Chalons to consummate his nuptials; nor of the
" King's going to see them at Villers-Cotterets: in a
" word, that I will not hear a syllable more about it
" till they have lain together again and again: that I
" long to be at Paris to be out of the way of hearing
" news: that if I had any way of revenging myself on
" the Bretons for what my friends make me suffer, I
" should have some patience, but, instead of that,
" they will be for six months together turning and re-
" turning you a piece of court news, and never be
" tired; that, for my part, I have still some little re-
" mains

" mains of the person of fashion about me, which
 " may, perhaps, render me too nice; so that I am
 " very quickly tired of such things." And this is fact;
 for I immediately fly from letters that I think have any
 news in them, to those of business. I took great pleasure
 yesterday in reading a letter from a good man of
 the house, who I was very sure would not mention a
 word of this marriage to me, but still salutes my Lady
 Countess with all humility, in the same manner as if
 she was close at my elbow. Alas! I do not want to be
 asked to weep just now; a turn or two in the Mall will
 do it presently. *Apropos*, there are wolves in my
 woods: I have two or three guards following me every
 night with their firelocks on their shoulders: *Beaulieu*
 is their captain: We have for these two days honoured
 the moon-light with our presence between eleven and
 twelve at night. The night before last we saw a black
 man coming towards us: I thought on *Auger*, and
 was ready to refuse him the garter; but, upon his
 coming nearer, it proved to be *La Mouffe*. Going a
 little farther, we spied a large white body extended upon
 the ground: We made up to this too; and behold it
 was a tree that I had cut down the week before. Here
 are some very extraordinary adventures! I wish you
 may not be frightened at them in your present condition;
 if so, take a glass of water, my dear. If we had
 a few Sylphs at our command now, one might furnish
 out a story fit to divert you with. I must take a journey
 to Provence, if it were only to speak with that
 same *Auger*. That history both occupied and amused
 me greatly: I have sent a copy of it to my aunt, thinking
 that you had not courage enough to write it twice
 over, and in so correct and exact a manner. God
 knows how differently I taste these kind of things to
 what I do the *Renaudots* * that employ their pens at my
 expence. Farewell, my sweet girl, I see you and
 think of you without ceasing. A thousand kind things
 to all the Grignans, in proportion to the degree of love
 you think they bear to me: I entirely trust to you in
 this.

LET-

* Meaning the news-mongers; The invention of newspapers
 was owing to the two *Renaudots*.

LETTER CI.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 25 October, 1671.

HERE am I again returned to my Lamentations of Jeremiah. I had but one packet this week; and I have great reason to believe the other lost. You can never have been seven days without writing to me. There is certainly some Demon that steals your letters, and diverts himself with them. It is *Auger's Sylph*: Be it what it will, I am inconsolable about it. Here is a letter for your Bishop. You was quite in the right to open his: It is crammed brim-full of tenderness: I take him at his word, and shall reckon more upon it than he would have me, I fancy; but it is serving him right: What business has he to engage himself in such violent protestations? I think my answer is not bad: The conclusion is sorry, and much in the common style; I had almost given into the *justice to believe*: but that is one of the things I am quite easy about. I am told, that the King has given a regiment to the Chevalier de Grignan: I suppose it is Adhemar; if it is any thing good, I am extremely glad. But what shall we say of Coulanges? Is not he the cleverest fellow in the world? I have read his letter; and, just as you imagined, I was ready to die with laughing all the while: His whole letter is excellent; but then his chapters! Good God! How I long to see and embrace him, and to talk about you to him! He is charmed with every thing you do, and indeed not without reason. One cannot sufficiently admire you. I could not do you those honours myself; but I am as sensible of them as others, and agree in the merit of them with my good friends, without doing like M. President Janin: Do you remember that little story? Monfr. de Coulanges writes very agreeably, and laughed very heartily as you foresaw, and I dare say at the very same passages. I propose examining all the chapters with him this winter, especially that of the head-dress; it seems to be much of the same kind with that of Aristotle on hats. But what shall we say of chocolate! Are you under no apprehensions of burning up your blood with it? May not all its boasted effects

effects conceal some latent fire at the bottom? Make me easy upon this head, my dear, for in your present condition I fear every thing. You know that I was very fond of chocolate; but I thought it was too hot for me; and, besides, I heard a very bad character of it: But from your account of it, and the wonders that you say it has wrought on you, I don't know what to think. That part of Coulanges's letter is very droll; but it is all so indeed. Farewell, my dearest and best beloved; I shall take great pleasure to read the chapter of the tenderness you have for me: I promise you I am fixed in the opinion I have of it; but to make it more sure, be you also fixed in giving me always such proofs of it, as you now do. Our little friend's letters are far from being agreeable; he is too full of words; I wish he would carry his civilities elsewhere.

LETTER CII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 28 October, 1671.

SCORPIONS, my dear! that was certainly a subject worthy an entire chapter in M. de Coulanges's book. That of the surprise of your bowels at the ice and chocolate is a matter I am resolved to sift to the bottom with him, or rather with you, and ask you seriously if your bowels are not offended with it; and if they did not give you fine colicks, to learn you how to give them such *antiperistases**; there is a grand word for you. I had a mind to be friends with chocolate, and so took some the day before yesterday, by way of digesting my dinner, that I might make the better supper; and yesterday I took it again by way of nourishment, to enable me to fast till supper time: It had every way the effect I desired from it; and what I think very extraordinary is, that it is according to my intention. I don't know what you may have done this morning; but I have been half way up my legs in the dew, in laying lines for some walks, that I am making round my park, which will be very beautiful when finished.

If

* A term in philosophy borrowed from the Greek, and signifies the action of any two opposite qualities, which mutually increase the vigour and activity of each other.

If my son is fond of woods and walks, he will have reason to bless my memory. I fancy that same brother of yours is at Paris: He chooses rather to wait for me there, than to come back hither; and I think he is in the right. But what think you of my husband the Abbe d'Effiat? I am very unfortunate in my husbands; he weds a young nymph of fifteen*, daughter to M. and Mad. de la Baziniere; a complete piece of affectation and coquetry. The wedding is to be held in Touraine; he has given up 40,000 livres per ann. in benefices for a God send him happy with her; but it is much doubted by every one, and most people think he had better have kept to me.

Monf. d'Harrouis writes me the following: "Let
 " Madame DE CARIGNAN § know that I adore her.
 " She is with her little states; they are not such folks
 " as we are, that give your 100,000 crowns at a time;
 " but I hope that they will, at least, give her as much
 " as we did to Mad. de Chaulnes for her welcome."
 He may wish, and I too; but your folks are too dry and close-hearted: The sun sucks up all their moisture, which is the source of goodness and affection. I am still in concern about that packet of yours, which I lost last week. Provence is become my native country, from thence come all my joys and all my sorrows. I always wait with impatience for Friday: It is the day of receiving letters from you. St. Pavin † some time ago made an epigram upon Friday, the day he always used to see me at the Abbe's: He addressed himself to the Gods, and finished with the following lines:

*Multipliez les Vendredis,
 Je vous quitte tout le reste.*

A l'applicazione, Signora. M. d'Angers || writes me wonders concerning you; he has been frequently with
 M. d'Uzez,

* Mary Ann Bertrand de la Baziniere was married to the Abbe d'Effiat, as the report then went, but was married afterwards to the Count de Nancre.

§ See letter LXXXII.

† This was a jovial Abbe, of whom Despreaux thus speaks, St. Pavin devot, &c.

|| Henry Arnauld, Bishop of Angers.

M. d'Uzez †, who cannot sufficiently praise your perfections: You are much obliged to him for the great regard he expresses for you; he seems full of a tenderness for you, which dilates itself into a thousand praises, that make you much admired. My Abbe loves you perfectly well; La Mouffe honours you, and I leave you to yourself. Ah! traitress! A word to the dear Grignans.

LETTER CIII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 1 November, 1671.

IF that first letter of Coulanges's, which I lost, was like the other three, I could absolutely cry for vexation; for, upon my word, no one can write more agreeably: You make a little dialogue between you that is worth all that can be said in the common way, each throws in their word so pleasantly: As for you, my dear, I discover your thoughts perfectly well, when you gave your consent that Coulanges should set out tomorrow, rather than stay with you all his life time. That kind of eternity gave you an apprehension like that of mine, at going in a litter with any one: I will not name you the only person in the world with whom I would consent to go. I am very glad to be acquainted with *Jacquemarre and Marguerite* *. I fancy myself with you all, and think I see you and Coulanges. I hope to alter your dress when I get to Grignan, and to put you quite in taste: But no more big-bellies, my dear Grignan, let me request that of you; have some pity on your charming wife, and let her lie, like good fallow ground, for a while; promise me but this, and I will love you from the bottom of my heart. I easily guess, my dear, what your apprehensions were in the fear of losing your Chief President; your imagination goes too fast, for there is no danger: Just such tricks does mine serve me every moment: I fancy all that is dear or good to me is going to be taken from me for ever,

† James Adhemar de Monteuil, Bishop of Uzez.

* The two figures are so called that strike the hours on the clock in the steeple at Lambesc, where Mad. de Grignan was at that time, at the holding of the assembly of the states of Provence.

ever, and that fills my heart with such distressful pangs, that were they to continue in their full force, there would be no such thing as bearing them: On these occasions we should call in to our assistance a full resignation to the dispensations and will of Providence. Is not M. Nicole admirable on that head? I am quite in raptures with him: I never met with his fellow. But it is certain, that the difference he requires of us for worldly esteem or censure, implies a degree of perfection more than human: I am the least capable of any one to enter into his meaning here; but tho' one falls short in the practice, yet it is still a pleasure to meditate with him on this subject, and to make a proper reflection on the vanity of being affected with pleasure or concern for such a bubble; and from being convinced of the truth of his arguments, we may in time come to make use of them on some certain occasions. In short, do as we will, it is being possessed of a real treasure to have so good a mirror to shew us the weakness and impotence of our own hearts. M. d'Andilli is no less charmed than ourselves with this beautiful book.

M. de Coulanges has won your money, you say; but surely you had laughing enough for it. Nothing can equal what he wrote to his wife. I do not think I shall part with him this winter, so happy shall I be to discourse with a man who has seen and admired you so nearly: For Adhemar, as he is a wicked creature, I will turn him out of doors: To be sure he has a regiment, and may enter by force. I am told, that this regiment is an agreeable distinction; but is it not ruinous likewise? What I like best in it, is the King's remembering Adhemar in his absence; God send he may remember his elder brother too, since he can go even into Sweden in search of faithful servants*.

I love the Coadjutor for loving me still; Adhemar, the Chevalier! approach that I may embrace you: I am strangely attached to these Grignans: It will be long before M. Nicole's book will produce such fine effects in me as it has done in M. de Grignan. I have ties on all sides; but there is one in particular that I feel in the very marrow of my bones; and what can M. Nicole

* See the note touching M. de Pomponne, let. LXXXIX. Vol. I.

do there? Good God! how truly I can admire him, as truly as any one! But how far am I from that happy indifference he would inspire us with! Farewel, my dearest little one! Do you not pity me for what I must feel now I know you are got into your ninth month? Take care of yourself, if you have any love for me. Methinks I am concerned to see all your Paris faces quit you one after another: You have your husband with you indeed, and he is a Paris face. My child, you must not suffer yourself to be totally forgotten in that same country: I must take you back with me: I will prevail on you to agree to it.

The Abbe Effiat's marriage is not finished yet; as I am told, he has required some farther time to consider of it; in my opinion the affair is broke off.

L E T T E R C I V.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 4 November, 1671.

AH! my dear child, what a strange scene passed this day two years at Livri *! How was my heart pierced at that time! but we ought not to dwell on such melancholy recollections. Let us talk a little of M. Nicole, it is a long time since we have had a word about him. I think there is a great deal of justice in your observations, concerning the indifference he requires of us, as to the esteem or disesteem of our neighbour; I think with you, that philosophy will hardly be found sufficient of itself, without the assistance of grace. He lays so great a stress on the preserving peace and unanimity with our neighbour, and recommends so many things to us in order to attain it, that it is next to an impossibility, after this, to be indifferent to what the world thinks of us. Guess what I am about; I am beginning this treatise again: methinks I could wish to swallow it like Ezekiel's roll. I am infinitely delighted with what he says upon pride and self-love, which enters into all disputes, under the feigned name of the love of truth. In short, this

* This relates to another miscarriage of Mad. Grignan at Livri, the 4 November, 1669. See Let. LXXXIII. Vol. I.

treatise is made for a great many in the world; but I cannot help thinking, that he had me principally in view when he wrote it. He says, that eloquence, and a facility in speaking, give a *lustre* to the thoughts; I greatly admire that expression; I thought it beautiful and something new. The word *lustre* is extremely apposite there, do you not think so yourself? We must read this book together at Grignan. Was I to nurse you in your lying-in, it would just be the thing. But what can I do for you at this distance? I pass my time in having masses said for you every day, and in a multitude of uneasy thoughts, which can be of no service to you; but which, nevertheless, it is impossible to avoid. I have at present ten or twelve workmen in the air, raising the timbers of our chapel; they run backward and forward upon the outside of it like so many rats; they hold by nothing, and are every instant in danger of breaking thir necks, that it makes my back ach with helping them from below. One cannot but admire the wonderful effects of Providence in the desire of gain, and be thankful to him, that he has created such people, who for twelve-pence are willing to do that which others would not do for twelve thousand pounds. "O thrice happy those who plant cabbages! when they have one foot on the ground, the other is not far off." I have this from a good author *. We have our planters too with us, who are forming my new walks; I hold the young trees myself while they set them in the ground, unless it rains so that there is no being abroad: But the weather is such as almost drives us to despair, and makes one wish for a Sylph to transport one to Paris. Mad. de la Fayette says, that since you tell the story of *Auger* in such a serious manner, she is persuaded nothing can be more real; and that you are not the least in jest with me: She thought at first that it had been a joke of 'Coulanges'; and it looks very like it. If you write to him about it, let it be in that style.

You

Panurgus.

You see that M. de Louvigni has not been able to purchase the post †, which was his father's: But M. de la Feuillade ‡ is finely provided for. I did not think he would ever have been so much in fortune's way. My aunt has had a fit of the ague, which has greatly alarmed me. Your daughter is troubled with her teeth, and pinches as you used to do, which is comical enough. What shall I tell you next? Consider, child, I am in a desert. La Troche, whom I expected here, is very ill; so that we are quite alone. We read a great deal, and the evenings and the mornings are as before.

LETTER CV.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 11 Nov. 1671.

WOULD to Heaven, my dearest child, that to be continually thinking of you, with the utmost anxiety and tenderness, could be of any real advantage to you! One would think, from the condition I am in, that it was not quite useless to you; and yet what service can I be of to you, at two hundred leagues distance? I do not doubt but every necessary precaution is taken where you are; that the medium will be observed between going to Aix and returning to Grignan; that a midwife has been sent for in proper time, to accustom you a little to the sight of her, and save you that chagrin and impatience that one naturally has from seeing a new face: As to a nurse, your own women must take care of you on this occasion; they will remember Mad. Moreau's way of managing; and as to yourself, my dear, you must be sure to keep yourself as quiet as possible, and not hazard a fever for the sake of talking a little, as you did at Paris. What shall I say to you? In short, it must be all in the same style. I have my head full of these things, and then it is natural to make them the subject of one's discourse; it is as

† Of Colonel of the French guards, enjoyed by Marshal Gramont, with the reversion to his son the Count de Guiche, who had then obtained leave of the King to resign.

‡ Francis d'Hubuffon, Duke de la Feuillade, and afterwards Marshal of France, succeeded Marshal Gramont, as Colonel of the French-guards, and was installed by the King the 4 January, 1672.

natural for you to be tired of it: As for me, I never dislike things in their place; but if that should be the case, I must forbear writing to you I think, till I know you are brought to-bed; and that would be something very strange too; so you had better accustom yourself, child, to thoughts which are so just and natural, when one's whole mind is full of them: Perhaps you may be brought to-bed when this comes to your hand; but what will that signify, if it does but find you in good health? I wait for Friday with the greatest impatience: See what a way I am in, to be thus continually forestalling time, which is what I was never fond of in my life, being always of opinion, that it flies fast enough of itself, without being hastened on. Mad. de la Fayette tells me, that she intends to write to you soon; I suppose she will hardly forget to tell you, that la M—— came into the Queen's apartment the other night, while they were playing a Spanish play: She looked like one lost and bewildered, and set out with an egregious blunder, by taking the upper-hand of Mad. du Fresnoi, which made her laughed at by every body, as a very ignorant ill-bred creature.

Pomenars passed thro' here the other day in his way to Laval, where he saw a great crowd of people gathered together; and asking what was the matter, was told that they were hanging a gentleman in effigy, who had stole away the daughter of the Count de Creance; this happened to be no other than himself: He got as near as he could to the scaffold, and finding the painter had made a shocking resemblance of him, he complained of it bitterly; and afterwards went and supped and lay at the house of the very judge that had passed this sentence on him: The next morning he came here, and was ready to kill himself with laughing, in telling us what had passed; however, he thought it best to decamp the next morning, as soon as it was light.

As to devices, my dear child, my poor brain is in a very bad condition for invention; however, as there are twelve hours in the day, and above fifty in the night, take the following, which my memory has furnished me with: *A rocket raised to a great height in the air, with these words; Cho pera, pur che s'innatzi:* I
with

wish with all my heart this had been mine, I think it so exactly made for Adhemar, *Let it perish, so it be exalted*. I am afraid I have seen this somewhere in the late tournaments, tho' I cannot exactly say where or when; only I think it too pretty to be my own. I remember to have seen the following one in some book, for a lover who had been bold enough to declare himself to his mistress: *A rocket in the air*, with these words, *da l'ardore l'ardire* *, this is very pretty; but this is not the thing. I am not quite sure whether that I intended to make it strictly agreeable to the rules of devices: Indeed I do not perfectly understand them; all I know is, that in general it pleased me, and whether it was in a tournament, or on a seal, would make no great odds; it is scarce possible to invent new ones for every occasion. You have heard me a thousand times repeating that part of a line in Tasso, *L'alte non temo* †: I used to have this over so frequently, that the Count des Chapelles had a seal made with an eagle flying towards the sun, and these words for the motto, *L'alte non temo* §. A very pretty thought! Perhaps, my dear, this is all to no purpose; neither do I care any thing about it, so you are but in good health.

L E T T E R C V I.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 15 Nov. 1671.

MY asking you whether you did not throw away my last letters was only an air; for though they do not merit all the esteem you set by them, yet, I believe, that after keeping those I used to write to you, when you was playing with a doll, you would keep these; but nothing of a moderate size is able to contain them now; you must have a great chest made on purpose.

Certainly there never was any thing more droll than what you say about the name of *Adhemar*: And it is fact, that there is no part of his letters blotted or scratched out, but just where he signs his name. I am a good

* My boldness arises from my ardour.

† I rise without fear.

§ I rise without fear.

deal puzzled about a name for his regiment: I have sent you my thoughts upon it: You know how much I am for *Adbemar*, and that I would maintain that name at the hazard of my life *; but I am afraid we are on the weakest side in this affair. I think the device § is very pretty,

Che peri, pur che m'inalzi.

This is the very language of a little sultan, of a little Alexander, of a rash, hot, headstrong, little Marechal of France. I want sadly to know what you think of it, and where I could possibly get it: for I am sure I did not make it †. As to M. Grignan, I firmly believe him, and am sure that he loves a *thrush* better than you; and so in return I love an *owl* better than him. Let him examine his own breast; as he loves you, so shall I love him in exact proportion. I know very well, that there is one thing by which he may convince me of it. But, my dear child, do not you sometimes wonder at the blunders and mistakes that arise from being separated at such great distances? I am in pain for you at the time, perhaps, that you are in good health; and though you should be never so ill, a letter from you would make me perfectly easy at the time I receive it: But this satisfaction cannot last long; for after all you must be brought to bed, and that is what distracts me, and with very good reason, till I hear of its being well over. You are resolved, it seems, to lie-in at Lambesc: Have you your surgeon with you? Deville's wife writes me word, that you are acquainted with him; that is a great deal: But I very much fear he is young, as he bleeds you; and young people cannot have had much experience in this

* The regiment mentioned here, is one of the regiments of horse called the Gentlemen's Regiment, which are always called by the name of the Colonel: This was called the Regiment of Grignan, and went by that name till the death of the Marquis of Grignan in 1704.

§ The body of this device was a sky-rocket.

† Father Bouhours, in his Discourse on Devices, mentions that of the Count d'Illiers, the body of which was the same as the foregoing, and the motto *Poco duripur che m'inalzi*.

this way. In short, I know not what I say : But, above all things, take care of yourself : Experience ought to have made you wise : As for myself, I am astonished at my own extensive knowledge in this respect.

Did I tell you that I have planted one of the prettiest spots imaginable ? Well, in the middle of this spot do I plant myself, where nobody will keep me company for fear of perishing with cold. La Mousse walks twenty times up and down to get himself a heat, and the Abbe is running backwards and forwards very busy ; as for me, there am I fixed, wrapped up in my long cloak, and thinking of Provence ; for that is a thought that never quits me. I wish much to hear of your being safely delivered, before I set out from hence ; for you must know I look upon the fatigue of the journey, and the violent anxiety of mind I must necessarily be under, as two things impossible to be supported at a time. Let me know what name *Adhemar* will make choice of : I think he seems at a stand about it. M. de Grignan stands up for *Grignan*, and with a great deal of justice. Rouville * is for the other. I think we must even reduce it at last to *le petit glorieux* †.

You ask me if we have any green leaves with us ; indeed have we ! a great many ; they are mixed with yellow and brown, which you know makes an admirable colour for a gown. Here are two good widows, Mad. de Senneterre, and Mad. de Leuville : One has most money, the other most beauty. You do not mention any thing to me about your assembly ; I think it holds longer than that of our estates : At least let me hear something about your own health. What you call trifles and idle stuff is just what I the most delight in. Alas ! if they are displeasing to you, you should never read my letters, but burn them. Farewell, my dearest and most lovely ; I recommend my life to your care.

* Francis Count of Rouville, remarkable for the great authority he had gained by always telling the truth.

† M. de Guillardages saying once, that all the Grignans were proud, (*glorieux*) and being asked whether he thought *Adhemar* so, replied, He is *PROUDISH*, (*GLORIEUSER*), and ever afterwards he went by the name of *Le petit glorieux*, or the Little proud one.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 18 Nov. 1671.

GOOD God! my dear child, in what condition will this letter find you! It will be the 28th before you will have it; and then, by that time, I hope you will be brought to bed, and happily, I trust in God. I am obliged to repeat these words frequently to keep my spirits up; for my heart is sometimes so violently oppressed, that I know not what to do with it; but it is nothing more than what is natural on such an occasion to one like me. I wait for my Friday's letters; and beseech those who have hitherto diverted themselves with keeping your letters, to suspend their game till you are delivered: They seem of late to have been busy with mine: I am quite in despair; for you know, that though I do not set a great value by my letters, yet I would choose to have those to whom I write receive them; for I never write for any other purpose, or to have any letters lost: I therefore regret all that you lose. What a notion; to meddle with my letters! Surely we are too nearly related for our correspondence to furnish any matter for curiosity; in short, it is unsupportable, let us talk no more of it. D'Hacqueville writes me word, that he left Mad. de Montausier at the point of death: I fancy she is dead before now. If I am obliged to write to M. de Montausier and Mad. de Crussol §, I shall be more put to it than poor Adhemar was, when he had the King and the Ministry to write to. I can no longer write; since I have found that my letters do not come to your hands, it has tied up mine. I think sometimes, that while I am perplexing my head here with a thousand fancies, they are firing guns, and making rejoicings for your safe delivery: This, however, I am not sure of; but must, as yet, languish in expectation. It freezes excessively hard, and I am all day tossing about these woods. It will be fine weather, I suppose, till we set out, and then we shall have a deluge of rain. Such are the

fine

§ Mad. de Montausier's daughter.

fine reflections I employ my time in: In short, when one has nothing more to say, it is just as well to finish.

L E T T E R CVIII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 22 Nov. 1671.

MADAME de Louvigni † is brought to bed of a son: You see, my dear child, you must absolutely have one too; for you expect it so fully, that, as you say, *La signora qui mit au monde une fille*, was not more taken in than you would be, if such an accident was to happen. I supplicate God every moment by myself and others, for the happy issue of a moment on which my life depends more than yours. I do not think I shall be able to leave this place till I am satisfied about it. There is no carrying such a cruel disquiet about one on the road, where there will be no such thing as having a letter from you: It is you then, my dear girl, that stop me.

I am extremely concerned at the condition you represent your First President to be in †: His death will be a very great loss to you; and I think your ill fortune very great in having so young, so genteel and handsome a person torn from you in this manner: If it please God to restore him to you, it will be next to a miracle: I am sure I never thought I should take such interest in a First President of Provence; but Provence is become my country since you have been in it.

Here is Mad. de Richelieu at last stepped into Mad. de Montausier's place. What a deal of vexation to others! Such is the way of the world! You are greatly beloved by all that family: As for me, I am very little concerned in these kind of changes; and keep up my court connexions with no other view than that of being serviceable to you in your absence. I have had a letter from M. de Pomponne full of the most real and affectionate friendship: He is highly satisfied with his Royal Master; and will, I am certain, fully answer the good opinion every one has of him.

† Mary-Charlot de Castelnau, wife of Anthony Charles Count de Louvigni, afterwards Duke de Gramont.

† Henryde Forbin Oppede.

I have no doubt of the history of *Auger* being true, nor ever had; it was only a notion of Mad. de la Fayette's, from a knowledge of Coulanges's comical way. She believes it now as well as myself. Winter reigns here at present in all its horrors. I am either walking about my gardens, or sitting by the chimney-corner: There is no taking any diversion: If one is not by the fire-side, one must be running about to get one's self a heat. I shall pass two more Fridays at the Rocks, by which time I hope to hear of your safe delivery. M. de Grignan is in justice obliged to take as much care of me now, as I did of him on a like occasion §.

L E T T E R C I X.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 25 Nov. 1671.

MY letters from Paris inform me of the death of your First President: You cannot think what concern it has given me. He was a very worthy man, and had a mighty agreeable person; but what rendered him still more considerable in my eyes, was the friendship which subsisted between you and him, and the advantages which might have accrued to you from such a connexion. When I have exhausted this subject, then I return to myself again, and find my heart overwhelmed with concern for your health, and the thoughts of your approaching condition. I do not know how it happened that I did not myself advise you to the steps you have taken, considering that I was equally fearful of your going to face the small-pox at Aix, and of going all the way back to Grignan: You had nothing left then, but to remain where you was, in doing which you have certainly taken the wisest step. I suppose you have been bled; I suppose too that you have taken all the precautions that are necessary; in short, I suppose and hope that all will go right. Mad. de Louvigni has set out a very good example; but I shall suffer much in waiting for the happy tidings; I could wish to receive them here. I expect your Friday's packet with my usual impatience. I fancy you will

§ See the Letter of 19 November, 1670. Vol. I.

will say a good deal to me on the death of that poor man: I am apprehensive of its having shocked you, and been of some ill consequence in your present condition: My own will not let me say any more to you just now; though it is not for want of sufficient leisure, I assure you; on the contrary, it is that which makes me give way to such a train of anxious thoughts about Provence; and as I have nothing but melancholy things to say to you, which I know you are in no need of at present, I shall take my leave of you for this time, with assuring you, that I am most affectionately yours,

LETTER CX.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 29 Nov. 1671.

IMPOSSIBLE, wholly impossible is it, my dearest child, for me to express to you the joy with which I received this ever-blessed packet which brought me the news of your safe delivery. When I saw a letter in it from M. de Grignan, I directly imagined you was brought to bed; but then not to behold the usual dear hand-writing on the superscription, oh! that was a dreadful circumstance! However, there was one from you dated the 15th; but, though I saw it, I passed it by unnoticed, that from M. de Grignan having strangely confused my poor brain. At last I ventured to open it with trembling hands and aching heart, and there found every thing that I could the most ardently wish for in this world. What do you imagine one does in such an excess of joy? Ask the Coadjutor; you cannot be a judge yourself, as having never experienced it. Will you know then what one does? Why one's heart sinks, and tears flow a-pace, without our being able to prevent them. Just such was my condition, my dearest creature: I wept, but with infinite pleasure: Tears like these convey pleasure not to be equalled by the most sprightly joy. You philosophers will be able to account for all these effects; I can only feel them. I am this minute going to order

as

as many masses to be said by way of thanks to God for this favour, as I did before to request it of him. Was the taste I am in at present to continue any length of time, it would make life too agreeable; but we should enjoy the present happiness; sorrow and vexation will return but too soon. How pretty it was to be brought to-bed of a boy, and to have him called after Provence*! It was every thing one could wish. My dear, I give you a thousand and a thousand thanks for the few lines you wrote to me: They fully completed the measure of my joy. My Abbe is as transported as myself, and our Mousse is in raptures. Adieu, my angel, I have a number of letters to write besides this.

L E T T E R CXI.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 2 Dec. 1671.

WELL, my dearest child, after my first transports of joy were a little over, I began to perceive that I yet wanted letters from Provence next Friday to complete my satisfaction. Lying-in women are liable to so many accidents, and your tongue is so well hung, as M. de Grignan tells me, that till nine days at least are happily over with you, I shall not be able to leave this place with any degree of ease or pleasure: So I shall get my Friday's letters, and then set out. Those of the Friday following, I shall receive at Malicorne. I am in a kind of surprise at no longer feeling that load at my heart, which used to accompany me day and night while I was in doubt about your delivery. I am now so completely happy, that I cannot cease returning thanks to the Divine Being, who has been graciously pleased to restore me to that peace of mind, which I did not look for so soon. I have received letters of compliment without end and number from Paris; and here in Brittany the young Lord's health has been drank for miles round. I have distributed money for drink, and feasted my own people like little kings. But nothing gave me more pleasure than a compliment I received from † *Pilois*, who came

* The Procurators of Provence were his godfathers, and gave him the name of Louis Provence.

† M^r. de Sevigne's gardener.

came in the morning with his spade upon his back, and
 “ My Lady, says he, I am come to let you know that
 “ I am heartily glad to hear that my Lady Countess has
 “ got a fine boy.” Now this is to me worth all the
 fine speeches in the world. M. de Montmoron* came
 hither post: Among other things we were talking of
 devices: He assures me he does not remember any
 where to have seen that which I proposed for Adhe-
 mar: He knew one which had a rocket, with these
 words, *Da l'ardore l'ardire* †; but that is not the thing:
 the other, he says, is much more complete,

Che peri, pur che m'inalzi.

And whether it is my own, or borrowed elsewhere, he
 thinks it excellent. But what do you say to M. de Lau-
 zun? You know what a noise he made this time twelve-
 month. Should we have believed any one that would
 have told us, that in less than a year he should be a
 prisoner? *Vanity of Vanities, all is vanity!* They say
 the new MADAME is quite dazzled with her gran-
 deur. You will hear what kind of stuff she is made
 of: When the person who is to be her physician was pre-
 sented to her, she said, she had no business for one; that
 she had never been bled or taken physick in her life;
 for that it was her way, if she was ill at any time,
 to take a walk of five or six miles, and that presently
 cured her. But let her go, and joy go with her.
 You see I write to you, as I would to one whose month
 is almost up. But now for M. de Grignan: He can-
 not be ignorant of what you must have suffered; and,
 if he really loves you, must it not give him the great-
 est concern, to be the cause of your being thus every
 year? After such good reasons as these, I have no more
 to say to him on that head, farther than to assure
 him, that I will not come to Provence if you are big
 again. I wish he may take this as a threatening: As
 for me, it would absolutely drive me to despair; but,
 however, I will stand to the wager: It is not the first
 I have stood to. Farewell, my charming Countess,
 I kiss the sweet baby, for whom I have a great af-
 fection,

* He was of the Sevigne family.

† This was a device of the Marechal de Bassompierre.

fection, but not near so much as for the lady his mother: It will be a long while before he attains to that. I have a great desire to hear some news from you about your assembly, and the christening, &c. A little patience will bring me to it all; but that, you know, is a virtue I am not much practised in.

L E T T E R CXII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Sunday 6 Dec. 1671.

THESE last letters were no less necessary to my happiness and peace of mind, than those which I had received the week before. The joy your being safely delivered gave me was so exquisite, that being unable to bear the continuance of it, I began to torment myself with apprehensions of the accidents which sometimes follow. A second packet then was wanting, and now I have it, and such as I could have wished. You have had the colick, you have had the milk-fever, but are now got over all. The Coadjutor tells me, that the boy was three hours without making water, and there was you in the most dreadful fright imaginable. Upon my word! You make a fine figure with your motherly love; What a joke! Do you really love it? But he is fair, that is what charms you! You love fair people; very civil indeed! M de Grignan may well be jealous: You leave him, he says, for the first comer, the last comer he should have said: In short, this same boy will make a great many jealous. The good Coadjutor writes me a string of particulars worthy the pen of M. Chais, or Mad. Robinet*. I fancy you and he fall out a little now and then: Is it not so? I hope my presence is not necessary to make you friends: I could wish to find the matter thoroughly settled to my hands. But, hark ye, good M. Secretary†, come this way a little if you please: What, you laugh at my device! You pretend to say it is to be met with in every book of that kind! It may be so; however, a person who understands these things very well,

* The one Mad. de Grignan's Surgeon at Lambesc, the other her midwife at Paris.

† M. d'Adhemar.

well, has not met with it yet: To tell you the truth, I never thought it was my own, and agree with you, that somebody else made it to my hands; but, be that as it may, you will at least own, that I could have no other view in applying it to you than by way of giving you pleasure. Ah! my poor Count, I am really sorry for you, this fair young gentleman will cut you quite out. Well now the balance will be equal in the family, which unluckily was wanting before. But I really ask your pardon for the comparifon of the *owl* †: I own it was a little shocking; but I was at that time quite incensed at you, for openly giving a *thrust* the preference to my daughter: If you are sorry for your fault, I will be sorry for mine. I have a great desire to know something about your assembly; it would be vexatious to have it break up without coming to some conclusion. The Bishop of Marseilles overwhelms me with civilities; he has given me an account of his dispute with the Coadjutor, and of my daughter's health. They have got hold of this dispute at Paris, and sent me word of it, as if I held no sort of correspondence myself with Provence. Lord bless them! It is my own country. Farewell, my dear Count, and you brave Adhemar, and you my ever dear, my ever lovely woman in the straw. I think I must say to you, as Barrillon said to me the other day, Those that love you better than I do, love you too well. When one is at such a distance, one scarce either says or does any thing properly; one cries when one should laugh, and laugh when one should cry: One is frightened for young surgeons of sixty-four: In short, child, these are the blunders of distance; to all which let me add my total ignorance of Provence. Now you have an advantage on your side, which prevents you from being laughed at by me, and that is your knowledge of the place where I am: all these things together will certainly oblige me to get a little nearer to you, and afterwards to go quite to Provence, in order to inform myself more fully upon the spot. As I am now quite easy on your account, I shall set out in about three days; so that

† See letter CVI.

that I shall receive no more letters till I get to Malicorné. I cannot thank you enough for the few lines you insert in the letters I have from the Grignans.

Mad. de Richlieu is now pretty well settled: If Mad. de Scarron had a hand in this, she is worthy of envy; for she must taste the most solid joy that this world can afford. I am told that Vardes is coming back,

LETTER CXIII.

To the Same.

The Rocks, Wednesday 9 Dec. 1671.

I AM just going to set out, my dear, but leave my solitude with some regret, as I am not to find you at Paris. I much question whether I should have returned thither this winter, but on account of my Provence journey, which makes me willing to get so far forward, it being impracticable to go all the way thither from hence, or to go to Paris as one does to Orleans. Well then, you may suppose me set out: I shall go and lie at Mad. de Loreffe's, who is a relation of yours, to avoid the stones of Laval. I shall be there to-morrow; and Friday next I shall send to Laval for my letters, which will be brought me to Mele, where I intend to lie; after that I shall think on nothing but Paris. If during this progress you should chance to be longer than usual without hearing from me, do not be in any pain about it. I am neither with child, nor lately brought to-bed, nor am I afraid of a coach. I have no Avignon-bridge to pass: The weather is extremely fine, and I shall have nothing to interrupt my journey; and therefore, as I am no longer under any concern about you, do not you be uneasy about me. I am loaded with compliments on the birth day of my pretty little grandson; whom I should be glad to hear of next Friday, and still more so of you. Poor M. de Lauzun is at Pignerol; M. d'Harrouis is in great affliction about it; but he tells me, that the news of your safe delivery, and of the birth and naming of your little boy, shot a gleam of joy to his heart, thro' all the sorrow with which it was surrounded: and I in return assured him, that his affliction had thrown a cloud over my joy. Adieu,
my

my charmer, we must part. I am overwhelmed with regret at leaving these woods. I will not tell you how great a part you have in my indifference for Paris. You know but too well already, how dear you are to me.

LETTER CXIV.

To the Same.

Maliorne, Sunday 13 Dec. 1671.

AT length, my dear child, I am got so far onwards in my journey: It is the finest weather imaginable, as MADAME says, to take a walk of five or six miles: As for La Mouffe, he runs about like a wild thing: He is a little troubled for want of sleep at night; for he has no notion of not being quire at his ease. I set out on Wednesday, as I told you I should; I got to Loreffe, where they insisted upon my having two of their horses, which at last I yielded to. We have now four in each coach, and fly along like wind. Friday I got to Laval, and stopt directly at the post-office, where I met with that honest, obliging, good man, all mire and dirt up to his very neck, who was just arrived, and brought me your letters; I thought I should have kissed him: You will judge, from my talking in this manner, that I, am no longer angry with the post; and in truth, the fault was not theirs; it is certainly, as you said, some enemy of Du Bois*, who hearing him talk of our correspondence, and plume himself upon the employment we had given him, had, out of diversion, stole our letters from him. I did not perceive it at first, thinking that you wrote to me only once a week; but when I came to know that you wrote twice, I cannot easily express the vexation and grief I felt at the loss of your letters. But I return to the pleasure I had in receiving the packet, with two of your letters enclosed, from the dirty hands of the postillion: I saw him open his little mail before me; and at the same time I opened mine *frast, frast*, and found, that you was very well. You write to me in Adhemar's letter; and then I have another from yourself, dated from your fire-side a fortnight after your lying-in. Nothing can be greater than the joy this certainty

* The Post-malter at Paris.

certainty of your health gave me. Let me beg you not to make too free with it, nor write me long letters; recruit yourself, and be very careful how you suffer any fatigue. Alas! my dear child, you was very bad. To have seen you suffer such a tedious labour would have killed me. They were forced to bleed you at last, it seems, and even began to be in some fears about you. When I think of the condition you was in at that time, I find myself troubled to the last degree; I am seized with a trembling all over: In short, it makes such an impression on my imagination, that I cannot compose myself to sleep afterwards. I have imparted what you told me to Mad. de la Fayette and to d'Hacqueville; I thought as you do, and that la Marans might now be easy, or rather uneasy, as she had no longer a subject for her very obliging and modest conjectures: I cannot but laugh at your thinking of her. But the post waits for me, as if I was Lady Governess of Maine; and I take a pleasure in making him stay thro' state. But I must say a word about my little boy; indeed he is very pretty; his large eyes are good signs of your having played your husband fair; and that is enough; so I beg his nose may not long remain between hope and fear: Is not that oddly said? It is a strange kind of uncertainty that! Never had a little nose so much to fear and so much to hope; there are a number of noses between both, for him to make choice of; but since he has got large eyes, let him endeavour now to please you, or else you will only have the mouth, as it is small; but that is not enough. My dear! my dear! you are doatingly fond of him; but resign him to Providence, that he may preserve him to you. What is the reason of his being so very weak? It was that surely that prevented him from helping himself in the birth; for I have heard people who have had children say, that this weakness in the child is the occasion of the difficulty in the mother's labour. Be very careful of the dear little creature; but at the same time resign him to Providence, if you hope to receive him from thence: This is a very Christian and *grand-motherly* repetition; Mad. Parnelle would tell you the same, and very justly.

ly. Farewell, my dear Countess: My friend the postilion is out of all patience; I must not abuse his civility. I shall receive no more letters from you till I get to Paris: I shall be charmed to embrace my poor little girl: You do not think of her now, and therefore I am determined to love her out of pure extreme generosity.

LETTER CXV.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday 18 December, 1671.

I AM this moment arrived, my dear child; and here I am, at my aunt's, surrounded, embraced, and questioned a thousand times by all my family and hers; but I leave them all, resolved to pay my compliments to you as well as to other people. M. de Coulanges is waiting to take me home with him, where he insists I shall lodge, because one of Madame de Bonneuil's sons has the small-pox; she very obligingly intended to keep it a secret; but the mystery was discovered, and they carried my little one to M. de Coulanges. I expect her here every minute, and shall then return back with her; but my aunt is resolved to see our first interview. It would have been a vexatious circumstance for me to have exposed the poor child, and to have been banished myself from the society of my friends for a month or six weeks, because Mad. de Bonneuil's child has the small-pox. Suppose me then at M. de Coulanges', whom I adore, because he is always talking to me of you: But do you know what happens between us? Why I cry, and my heart is so strangely oppressed, that I make a sign with my hand for him to be silent, and silent he is. He tells me, that when he saw you, you shut your eyes, and said, that you was in my room; ay! indeed, you was sure you was at Paris, for there was M. de Coulanges. He acted this very drolly, and it gives me great pleasure to find you have still a little of the mad-cap about you: I was frightened to death lest you should be always the Governor's lady. Good God! What a deal of talk am I going to have with M. de Coulanges! I entreat you to be careful of yourself, that is, be as much yourself as possible, and do not let me find you altered: I would have

have you likewise take some regard to your beauty: Get fat; recruit yourself; and remember all the good resolves you have made: And if M. de Grignan has any regard for you, he will give you time to recover yourself, otherwise it is all over with you, I can tell you; you will be always as thin as Mad. de S. Herem: I am glad I thought of putting this in your head, nothing can frighten you more than such a resemblance; take care and avoid then. As for your little boy, the condition he was in, does not in the least make matters better between chocolate and me: I am sure he has been burnt up; it is happy for him that he has got a little moisture since, and is recovered: He has been snatched out of the fire; I heartily rejoice with you at it.

Monsieur DE COULANGES.

I shut my eyes, and in opening them again, I behold that charming mother, who is so much your delight and mine; by this I know I am at Paris; I am going to entertain her with all your perfections. Do you know that I am more bewitched with you than ever, and fear that I shall take the Chevalier de Breteuil's place? I know this would not greatly please M. de Grignan, which is the only thing that gives me concern in so great an undertaking. But seriously speaking, fair Countess, you are a master-piece of nature, and as such I speak of you whenever I have occasion to mention you. I was yesterday at M. de la R. F.'s, where I met with M. de Longneville; we talked of nothing but Provence, and the bright planet that shines there. Adieu, my charming Countess; I am looking at that man in the tapestry, who is opening his breast: Believe me, if you could see mine this instant, you would see my heart as you see his; a heart which is wholly yours, and languishes for you; but do not tell this to M. de Grignan. Your daughter is a little brown beauty; she is very pretty: here she is, kissing me, and prattling to me; but she never cries. I love her, that is certain; but not so well as I do you. There is no such thing as talking to our charming mother about you; the tears fall in round drops down her cheeks: Good heavens! what a mother!

L E T.

LETTER CXVI.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 23 December, 1671.

I WRITE to you now somewhat before-hand, because I want to have a little chat with you: Just as I had sent away my packet, that day I got in here, Du Bois brought me the letter of yours which I supposed lost; you may guess with what pleasure I received it: I could not answer it then, for Mad. de la Fayette, Mad. de St. Geran, and Mad. de Villars, all came to welcome me to Paris. You seem to be in all the astonishment that might be expected from such a misfortune as that of M. de Lauzun's: Your reflections on that subject are all very just and natural; every person of understanding has made the same; but now it begins to be no more thought of. This is an excellent country for forgetting the unhappy. The despair with which he began his journey was such, that it was resolved not to lose sight of him for a moment. When those who were with him would have had him alight in a dangerous part of the road, where they were apprehensive of the coach being overset, he made answer, *Accidents like these are not made for me.* He declares himself innocent of any thing relating to the King, and says his only crime is having too powerful enemies. The King has said nothing about the matter, and this silence easily shews the nature of his crime. He imagined he was to have been left at Pierre-Encise, and accordingly, when he got to Lyons, he began by paying his compliments to M. d'Artagnan; but when he was informed that they were carrying him to Pignerol, he gave a great sigh, and cried, *I am lost.* He was greatly pitied in all the towns thro' which he passed; and certainly his disgrace is very great.

The day after he left Paris, the King sent for M. de Marillac, and told him, that he gave him "the government of Berri, which was lately Lauzun's." "Sire," replied Marillac, "let your Majesty, who is so well acquainted with the rules of honour, be pleased to reflect, that I was no friend to M. de Lauzun; have the goodness to put yourself but for a moment in my place,

“ place, and then judge whether I ought to accept the favour you are pleased to offer me.” “ You are too scrupulous,” said *the King*, “ I know as much of that affair as any one, and see no reason you have to make any difficulty about it.” “ Since your Majesty is pleased to approve of it,” replied Marillac, “ I have no more to say, but throw myself at your feet in grateful thanks.” “ But,” said *the King*, “ I gave you a pension of twelve thousand franks, till something better could be done for you.” It is true, “ Sire, I now return it to you again.” “ And I,” replied *the King*, “ give it you a second time, and shall now do your gallant sentiments all the honour they deserve.” Upon which he turned about to his ministers, and acquainted them with the scruples M. de Marillac had made, adding, “ I admire the difference between these two men; Lauzun did not think it worth his while so much as to thank me for the government of Berri, nor even to take the least care about it; and here is one who expresses the most lively gratitude.” The whole of this is strictly true; I had it from M. de la R. F. I thought this little detail would not be displeasing to you; if I was mistaken, let me know in your next. This poor man is very bad with the gout, much worse than last year: He talks very frequently of you, and I believe loves you as if you was his own child. Monfr. de Marillac has been to see me. Every body talks to me of my dear child. I have at length taken courage, and been talking these twelve hours with M. de Coulanges: I cannot leave the man; it was great good fortune that brought me to lodge with him. I do not know whether you have heard that Villarceaux, in speaking to the King about a post for his son, artfully took the occasion of telling him, that some people had taken it in their heads to tell his niece *, that his Majesty had some designs upon her; that, if it was so, he begged his Majesty would make use of him, as an affair of that kind would be better

* Louisa-Elizabeth Rouxel, known afterwards by the name of Mad. de Grancei, when she was one of the dressers to Mary-Louisa of Orleans, Queen of Spain: She was younger sister to Mary-Louisa Rouxel, Countess of Marci. They were called the angels.

better in his hands than in any other; and that he did not doubt of success: The King fell a laughing, and told him, *Villarsceaux, you and I are too old to think of attacking young ladies of fifteen*; and, like a generous and gallant man, made a jest of the old fellow, and spread the story about among the ladies. The *angels* are greatly enraged at their uncle for it, and have resolved never to see him again; and he, on his part, is a little ashamed of the figure he makes on the occasion. I write you all this quite plain; for I think his Majesty appears so much to advantage in all that he does, that there is no occasion of making a mystery of what one says concerning him.

It is reported, that there were a great number of very beautiful and surprising things found in M. de Lauzun's cabinets; pictures without end or number; naked figures, one without an head, and others with the eyes put out, this was the lady *your neighbour*; locks of hair, some large, some small, and tickets to avoid confusion, and a thousand pretty things of this kind: But I would not answer to the truth of all this; you know what a loss is given to invention on such occasions.

I have seen M. du Meme, who has at length lost his dear wife: When he saw me, he fell a sighing and weeping, and I could not refrain from tears myself. Every body visits that family, and I would have you make him your compliment of condolence; you ought to do it for the remembrance of Livri, which you are still so fond of.

Is it possible, that my letters should be so agreeable to you as you say they are? I find nothing like it when they come out of my hands, I fancy they get it in passing thro' yours: In short, it is very lucky for you that you do like them; for you are so loaded with them, that you would be heartily to be pitied, were it otherwise. M. de Coulanges wants sadly to know which of your ladies it is that has a taste for them; we reckon it a very good sign on her side, for my style is so loose, that it requires a good share of natural understanding and knowledge of the world, to be able to take up with it.

The

The Abbe Tetu has time enough upon his hands now, as he has no longer the Hotel de Richlieu to be at, so that we profit by it. You would think, to look at Mad. de Soubise, that she is with child, of four at least. Over and above this, the King sets out the sixth of next month for Chalons; he is to make several other little tours, and some reviews by the way: His journey will last about twelve days; but the officers and troops will proceed further. I have a notion of another expedition on foot like that of the Franche-Comte. You know the King is *the hero of every season* *. The poor courtiers are quite broke; they have not a penny left. Brancas asked me yesterday, very seriously, to lend him some money upon a pledge; he gave me his word, that he would never mention it to any one, and had rather, he said, be concerned with me than another. La Trouffe begged of me to let him into some of Pomenar's methods of getting a genteel livelihood: In short, they are all driven to their last shifts. Farewell, my dearest Countess, there is reason in every thing; this letter is swelled into a perfect volume. I embrace the laborious Grignan, *Seigneur Corbeau*, the presumptuous Aghemar, and the fortunate *Louis Provence*, on whom the fairies and astrologers have breathed good fortune. *E con questo mi raccomando.*

LETTER CXVII.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, Christmas-day, 1671.

THE day after I received yours, M. le Camus came to pay me a visit. I spent the time in inquiring of him what his sentiments were with regard to the care, zeal and assiduity, which M. de Grignan had shewn in his endeavours to bring about the King's affairs in Provence. M. de Lavardin came in a little afterwards, and he gave me his word, that he should take care and set it in its true light, in a proper place, before the day was over, I could not have met with two people more proper for my purpose: They are bass and tenor. In the evening I went to M. d'Ulez, who still keeps his room, and there we talked a good deal about

* A thought in a Madrigal of Mademoiselle de Scuderi's.

about your affairs. We had both heard the same news, and that an order was intended to be sent for dissolving the assembly, and to take another opportunity of shewing them what it was to be refractory.

But indeed, my dear, my heart is heavy, and very heavy, in not having you here with me. I should be much more happy, if I knew any one that I loved as well as I do you, for then I should have wherewithal to comfort myself in your absence; but I have not been able to meet with your equal in my affections as yet, nor indeed any thing that comes near you. A thousand unlooked-for things offer themselves to awaken a more than a common remembrance of you, and then I am overset for that time. I am uneasy to know where you propose going after your assembly is dissolved. The small-pox rages at Aix and Arles, Grignan is very cold, Salon very lonely; prythee then, come and take an apartment with me; indeed you shall be very welcome. Adieu; you shall get rid of me for this time, this shall not be volume the second. I have no more news in my budget: If you have any questions to ask me, I will endeavour to make you answers to them. I was last night at the Minims; I am going now to hear Bourdaloue: They say he out-does every thing, and that no one ever preached before himself. A thousand compliments to all the Grignans.

L E T T E R CXVIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Christmas-day at 11 at night, 1671.

I HAVE wrote to you this morning already; but I have just received from M. d'Uzez the letter you wrote me by Ripert. You give me a very good account of affairs in Provence. I wish to God the King may be contented with what the Provencals have agreed to do; the description of their heads, and the manner they are to be treated in, is admirable; and the coming-to of the good bishop is quite natural. We have had Mad. Scarron here to supper; she says, that of the vast number of letters that Mad. de Richlieu has received, not one comes up to M. de Grignan's: She says, she kept it a good while in her pocket, and shewed it to several people, and that nothing could be better wrote,

nor could any one express themselves more elegantly, nobly, and affectionately, than he did with regard to the late Mad. de Montausier *: In a word, she seemed quite charmed with it; I declared I would acquaint you with this. I shall communicate your letter to d'Hacqueville and M. le Camus. I think of nothing but Provence, and begin to look upon myself now in your neighbourhood. Adieu, my dearest child.

LETTER CXIX.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 30 Dec. 1671.

ONE sure and mighty pretty sign of the little disposition I have to hate you, is, that I would with my own will write to you a dozen times a day: Does not this token, my dear, appear to you much like that of M. de Coulanges, when he made you the offer of passing the remainder of his days with you? Indeed, if that was to be the case, you would have enough to do; for I am as prolix in writing to you, as I am laconic when I write to others. I have inquired much of Riport about your health. Upon my word I am not pleased with you: You deserve to be scolded: You behaved in your lying-in as if you had been the wife of some Swiss captain: You do not take broths enough: You had not lain-in three days, when you began to chatter and talk; you got up before the tenth; and after all this you are surpris'd that you are thin. I was in hopes that you would have taken a little more care of yourself, and endeavour'd to recruit and grow fat. Where did you get this whim of mimicking Mad. de Crussol? I am always striving to reform you, by setting examples before your eyes: This way of going on has not affected her, but it will affect you, believe me: In short, you cannot offend or vex me more highly, than in spoiling your pretty face: You know how fond I am of it; ought you not then to take some care of it for my sake?

You are much in the right to say, that Provence is my fixed residence since it is become yours. Paris quite
stiffles

* Mad. de Richlieu succeeded Mad. de Montausier, as one of the Dames d'Honneur, or Ladies of Honour to the Queen.

stiles me: I long to be set out for Grignan. But, my dear child, how lonely will you be, if you return to your castle! Why, you will be like Psyche upon the mountains. I can have no content where you are not: This is a truth, the force of which I experience more and more every hour. You seem wanting to me every where, and whatever recalls you to my remembrance goes to my heart. The King's journey is as yet uncertain; but the troops still continue their march. Poor La Trousse is going, and Sevigne is already upon his way: They are to go to Cologne. They are quite wild about this expedition. Farewell, my angel, I am perfectly well at M. de Coulanges's, and still take care to put off the small-pox air as far as possible. I have no great relish for returning to that great rambling house, where, instead of you, I shall meet only with Mad. de Bonnueil. Coulanges is my dear delight: We are for ever talking of you. I shall give M. de la R. F. your letter: I am persuaded he will like it much. I hate the direction of your letter when it is, *To the Marchioness de Sevigne*; call me *Pierrot*. Your others are amiable, and inspire one with a tender disposition to read the rest.

LETTER CXX.

To the Same.

The First Day of the New Year, 1672.

I WAS last night at M. d'Uzez's. We came to a resolution to send you a courier. He promised to let me know the success of his audience with M. le Tellier, and whether he would have me bring Mad. le Coulanges * thither with me; but as it is now past ten at night, and I have not yet heard any thing from him, I shall write to you by myself. M. d'Uzez will take care to inform you of what he has done. There should be some endeavours used to mollify the rigour of the orders, by representing, that it would be entirely depriving M. de Grignan of the power of serving his Majesty, if he should by this means be rendered disagreeable to the province; and if, after all, they are obliged

* Mad. de Coulanges was niece to the wife of M. le Tellier, Minister of State, and afterwards Chancellor of France.

to send the orders, it is the opinion of the wisest people here, that it would be prudent to suspend the execution of them till an answer can be had from the King, to whom M. de Grignan has wrote, as a person, who, being upon the spot, is convinced that it would be the most for his service to grant them a pardon for this time at least. If you knew how some people blame M. de Grignan for the little regard he shews to his own country, in endeavouring to exact such a strict obedience, you would see how difficult it is to please every body, and it would have been still worse if he had done otherwise. Those who find such charms in his post, do not know the difficulties that attend it. The King's intended journey is now broke off; but the troops continue their march to Metz. Sevigne is there by this time; La Trousse is going; and both of them fuller of loyalty than ready money. Here is the Archbishop of Rheims *, who first sends you his sincere good wishes; and then acquaints you, that M. d'Uzez has not been able to see his father to-day: He assures me moreover, that the King is very well pleased with your husband; that he accepts of the present the province has made him; but, as his orders have not been punctually observed, he has sent *lettres de cachet* to banish the consuls. I can say no more to you by letter. All that remains now is to be entirely devoted to his Majesty's service; but, at the same time, to endeavour a little to manage the minds of the Provencals, which will be found the best means of having the King punctually obeyed in that country.

M. de la R. F. sends you word, and I together with him, that if you are not pleased with the letter you wrote him, it is for want of knowing better: I think he is quite in the right; for it is full of an agreeable life and spirit. You have an answer to it enclosed. Adieu, my dear Countess, I think of you night and day. Furnish me with some opportunity of serving you: It will be a pleasing employment for my tenderness.

L E T.

* Charles Maurice le Tellier.

LETTER CXXI.

To the Same.

Paris, Tuesday 5 January, 1672.

YESTERDAY the King gave audience to the Ambassador from Holland, at which he would have the Prince, Marshal Turenne, the Duke de Bouillon, and Marshal Crequi present, that they might hear all that passed. The Ambassador presented his letter to the King, which his Majesty would not have read, though the Ambassador proposed it; as he said he already knew the contents, having a copy of it at that time in his pocket. The Ambassador expatiated largely on the justifications mentioned in the letter, and on the strict manner in which the States had examined their behaviour, to discover in what they could possibly have given offence to his Majesty; that they were not conscious of ever having been wanting in the respect that was due to him; and yet to their great surprise, had heard that the prodigious preparations his Majesty was making were entirely destined to fall upon them; that they were ready to satisfy his Majesty in every thing he should be pleased to require from them, and humbly implored him to remember the goodness his Royal Predecessors had ever shewn towards them, and to whom they owed the present flourishing condition they were in. The King then interrupted him, and, with an inimitable grace and majesty, replied. That he was not now to learn the endeavours that had been used to stir up his enemies against him; that he thought it but prudent to prevent a surprise, and that he found it necessary for his own defence to make himself thus respectable by sea and land; that after giving a few more necessary orders, he should, in the beginning of the spring, take such steps as he might judge most advantageous for his own glory, and the good of his kingdom; and then gave the Ambassador to understand, by a motion of his head, that he would have no reply. The letter corresponded exactly with the Ambassador's speech, only that it concluded with assuring his Majesty, that they (the States) would do whatever he should be pleased to

order them, provided it did not oblige them to break with their allies.

The same day M. de la Fueillade was received at the head of the regiment of guards, and, as is the custom, had the usual oaths administered to him by a Marshal of France. At the same time the King, who was there present, spoke himself to the regiment, and told them, that he had given them M. de Fueillade for their *Mestre de camp*; and then, with his own hand, presented him with the *pike**, a thing which is commonly done only by a commissioner appointed for that purpose by the King; but his Majesty was resolved that no mark of distinction or favour should be wanting on the occasion.

You know Langlee, he is as insolent and impertinent as possible: He was at play the other day with the Count de Gramont, who, upon his taking too many freedoms, told him, "M. de Langlee, keep these familiarities against you play with the King."

Mareschal Bellefond has requested leave of the King to dispose of his post †. Never will any one do it to more advantage; for every body believes, and I more than any one, that it is in order to pay his debts, and retire from the world.

The Procurator General of the Court of Aids ‡ is made First President there: This is a great advancement for him. Do not fail to write to him, on the occasion, one or other of you; and which ever of you it is, let the other add a line or two in the letter. The President Nicolai is restored to his post §. Here is news for you.

LETTER CXXII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 6 January, 1672.

SO then, my dear child, you would not have me weep to see you separated so many miles from me; but you cannot prevent this disposition of Providence from appearing very hard and cutting to me: It will be
a long

* It was a custom then to receive the pike on such occasions as it is now the sponton.

† Of Chief Master of the Household to the King.

‡ Nicolas le Camus.

§ Of First President of the Chamber of Accounts.

a long time before I shall be able to accustom myself to it; but I will stop short, and not involve you in a long train of sentiments, which this would naturally lead me into. I will not set you a bad example, nor stagger your fortitude with the relation of my weakness: Preserve your reason in its full force; enjoy the greatness of soul you are possessed of; while I, on my side, shall seek consolation and assistance from the tenderness and affection of mine. I was yesterday at St. Germain's: The Queen made the first advances to me, and I made my court, as usual, at your expence. We had all the affair of your lying-in over; and then talked about my journey to Provence, not forgetting the late one to Brittany; and how lucky Mad. de Chaulnes had been in meeting with me there. I should have told you, that that lady went to St. Germain's with me. As for MONSIEUR, he drew me aside to a window, to talk to me about you, and very seriously desired me to make his compliments to you, and to let you know how glad he was to hear of your being safely brought to bed: He said so many obliging things on that subject, and in such a manner, as it must have been my own fault, if I did not understand that he had an inclination to attach himself to your service; for they say he is grown weary of *worshipping the Angel*. I found MADAME much better than I expected. I could not see M. de Montausier, he being closeted with MONSEIGNEUR. I should never have done repeating all the compliments that were made both to you and me; but they are all lost in air. I was quite happy to get home: But who do you think I found there? The Presidents Beauville and Galiffet; and whom should they be talking of but Mad. de Grignan! Here is your little girl coming: You say she serves to put me sometimes in mind of you; I know what answer you expect, that there is no occasion for that. I am going out in the coach. Whither? say you: To Mad. de Valavoire's. What to do there? To talk of Provence. Only mind that good woman there, said Coulanges the other day, she is for ever in company with her daughter. I have received yours of the 30th of last month. Indeed, my dear, you displease me greatly in talking of your amiable letters in the manner

you do. What pleasure can you take in finding such faults with your manner and style, and comparing yourself to the Princess d'Harcourt? I cannot conceive where you got this false and injurious humility: It is wounding my heart, offending justice, and doing an injury to truth. What a depravity of manners! For heaven's sake, leave off this way, and see things as they really are: You will then have nothing to do but to guard against vanity, and that affair may be settled between your confessor and you. I am distracted at the thoughts of your being so thin: What is come of the time, when you would eat only the head of a snipe, or the wing of a lark, in a day, for fear of growing too fat? If you should be with child again upon the back of this, be assured that all is over with you; you will be lost beyond hope. We were talking of you yesterday at Mad. de Coulanges's, when Mad. Scarron reminded us with how much wit and spirit you supported a bad cause once in the same place, and on the very carpet we were then sitting upon. There was Mad. de la Fayette, Mad. Scarron *, Segrais, Caderousse, Abbe Tetu, Guilleragues and Brancas. You and your merit are never forgotten; your friends preserve the most lively remembrance of both; but, when I come to reflect where you are, though I know you are a little queen, yet how can I forbear sighing? We sigh too at the life we lead at St. Germain's and here; so that we are for ever sighing. You know, I suppose, that Lauzun, as he was going into the place of his confinement, repeated, *In sæcula sæculorum*: I fancy there are some here that would gladly answer *Amen*; and others again be as ready to cry out, No. Indeed, when he was jealous of your neighbour † he used her very ill; and how did he serve many others?

Your little girl is very pretty: The sound of her voice goes to my very heart: She has a thousand little engaging ways, which divert me, and make me fond of her; but I never can conceive it possible for her to equal you in my affection.

L E T-

* Frances d'Aubigne, afterwards Marchioness de Maintenon.

† See Letter CXVI.

LETTER CXXIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 13 January, 1672.

FOR heaven's sake, my dear child, what do you talk of? What pleasure can you take in thus abusing your person and understanding, and vilifying your good conduct, and saying, that one must have a great deal of good nature to think of you sometimes? Though I am certain you cannot think all you say, yet it hurts me to hear it: You really make me angry with you; and though, perhaps, I ought not to answer seriously things that are only said in joke, yet I cannot help scolding you before I go any further. You are excellent again, when you say that you are afraid of the wits: Alas! if you knew how insignificant they are when you come near them, and how encumbered they are with their own dear persons, you would set them by. Do you remember how you used to be deceived in them sometimes? Do not let distance magnify objects too much; it is one of its usual effects.

We sup every evening at Mad. Scarron's; that woman has a most engaging wit, and an understanding surprisingly just and clear. It is a pleasure to hear her sometimes reason upon the horrid confusion and distractions of a country, which she is very well acquainted with. The vexations that Heudicourt undergoes in a place that appears so dazzling and glorious; the continual rage of Lauzun; the gloomy chagrin and cares of the Court Ladies, from which the most envied are not always exempt, are things which she describes in the most agreeable and entertaining manner. Such conversations as these lead us insensibly from one moral reflection to another, sometimes of a religious, sometimes of a political kind. We frequently turn the discourse on you: She is very fond of your wit and manners; and, whenever you return hither, you are sure of being highly in vogue.

But let me give you an instance of the King's goodness and generosity, to shew you what a pleasure it is to serve so amiable a master: He sent for Marshal Bellefond into his closet the other day, and thus accosted

him: "Monsieur le Marechal, I insist upon knowing your reasons for quitting my service: Is it thro' a principal of devotion? Is it from an inclination to retire? Or is it on account of your debts? If it is the latter, I myself will take care of them, and inform myself of the state of your affairs." The Marshal was sensibly affected with his goodness: "Sire," answered he, "they are my debts; I am overwhelmed with them, and cannot bear to see some of my friends, who assisted me with their fortunes, likely to suffer on my account, without having in my power to satisfy them." "Well then," said the King, "they shall have security for what is owing them: I now give you a hundred thousand franks on your house at Versailles, and a grant of four hundred thousand more, as a security in case of your death. The hundred thousand franks will enable you to pay off the arrears, and so now you remain in my service." That heart must be very insensible indeed, that could refuse the most implicit obedience to such a master, who enters with so much goodness and condescension into the interests of his servants: Accordingly the Marshal made no farther resistance: He is now reinstated in his place, and loaded with favours. This is all strictly true.

Not a night passes at St. Germain's without balls, plays, or masquerades. The King shews an assiduity to divert MADAME, that he never did for the other. Racine has brought out a new piece called *Bajazet*, which they say carries every thing before it: Indeed it does not go *in emperando*, as the others did. Mons. de Tallard says, that it as much exceeds the best piece of Corneille's, as Corneille's does one of Boyer's; this now is what you may call praising by the lump: There is nothing like telling truth: However, our eyes and ears will inform us more fully; for *,

Du bruit de Bajazet mon ame importunee,

oblige me to go immediately to the play; we shall see what it is.

I have

* A Line in Despreaux.

I have been at Livri: Ah, my dear child, how well did I keep my word with you! and how many tender thoughts of you filled my breast! It was delightful weather, tho' very cold; but the sun shone finely, and every tree was hung with pearls and crystals, that formed a pleasing diversity of colours. I walked a great deal; the next day I dined at Pomponne: It would not be an easy matter to recount all that passed during a stay of five hours: However, I was not at all tired with my visit. Mons. de Pomponne will be here in three or four days: I should be very much vexed, if I was obliged to apply to him about your Provence affairs; I am persuaded he would not hear me: You see I give myself airs of knowledge. But really nothing comes up to M. d'Uzez; I never saw a man of better understanding, nor one more capable of giving sound advice: I wait to see him, that I may inform you of what he has done at St. Germain's.

You desire me to write you long letters; I think you have now sufficient reason to be contented: I am sometimes frightened at the length of them myself; and was it not for your agreeable flattery, I should never think of venturing them out of my hands. Madame de Brisfac is excellently well provided for the winter in M. de Longueville and the Count de Guiche; but nothing is meant but what is quite fair and honourable, only she takes a pleasure in being adored. La Marans is never seen now, either at Mad. de la Fayette's, or at M. de la R. F.'s: We cannot find out what she is doing; we are apt to judge a little rashly now and then: She took it into her head this summer, that she must be ravished, and ravished she would be; but I am of opinion, that she is in no great danger of it: Good God! what a mad creature it is! and how long have I looked on her in the same light, as you do now! But now let me tell you, my dear, it is not my fault that I do not see Madame de la Valavoire*: I am sure there is no occasion to bid me go and see her, it is enough that she has seen you, for me to run after her; but then she is running after somebody else; for I might for ever desire her to wait at home for me; I cannot get her to do me that favour.

It

* A lady of quality in Provence, who was just then come to Paris.

It is M. le Grand that your joke fits, and a very good one it is. Poor Chatillon is every day teasing us with the most wretched ones imaginable.

LETTER CXXIV.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday Evening 15 January, 1672.

I WROTE to you this morning, my dear child, by the courier, who brings you most pleasing and agreeable tidings about your Provence affairs; but I shall write to you again to-night, that it may not be said, that the post came in without letters from me. I do really believe that you love me; you tell me so at least, and what end can you have in deceiving yourself and me too? And if you did not love me, you would be greatly to be pitied in being thus overwhelmed with such a number of my letters: Yours make the happiness of my life. I shall say nothing to you about the *fine soul*; it was Langlade who made use of the expression, *the fine soul*, by way of joke; but in earnest, you have a fine soul: It is not perhaps one of those first-rate souls, like that of *What's his name* * the Roman, who rather than forfeit his word returned back to the Carthaginians, tho' he was well assured they would instantly put him to death: But under this I think you may challenge a place with the foremost.

We have been to see the new piece of Racine's, and thought it very fine. My *daughter-in-law* † is in my opinion the most surprisingly excellent performer that I ever saw: She is infinitely before *Desfillets*; and as for me, tho' I am thought to have a tolerable good talent for the stage, yet I am not fit to snuff the candles when she appears: She is ugly when you come near her, therefore I do not wonder my son's passion was damped by her presence: But when she speaks verse, she is really

* Mons. de Sauvebœuf, giving an account one day to the King's brother of a negotiation in which he had been employed at the Court of Spain, said to him, What's your name, What's your name, the King of Spain said to me, &c.

† Meaning La Champmele, the actress, with whom her son, the Marquis de Sevigne, had been in love. It is said that she was not possessed of any natural genius; but that Racine, who was likewise in love with her, had taught her to pronounce verse mechanically.

ly adorable. *Bajazet* is altogether a fine performance; the distress rises towards the end, and the passions are very strong, and not of that extravagant kind as in *Berenice*; but yet I cannot say I think it surpasses his *Andromache*. As for the fine pieces of Corneille, they as much exceed this, as your idea exceeded Make the application, and remember that piece of folly; but be assured, that nothing will ever come up, I do not say surpass, but come up, to the enchanting passages we meet with in Corneille. He read us the other day, at M. de la R. F.'s, a piece of his, which shewed what he once had been: I wish you had been with me that afternoon; I am sure you would not have thought your time ill spent: You would have dropped a tear or two, for I myself shed twenty; besides, you would have greatly admired your *sister-in-law*: You would have had *the angels* before your eyes, and la Bourdeaux dressed out like a little miss. The Duke was behind the scenes, and Pomenars above with the footmen, wrapped up his in cloak, for fear of the Count de Creance, who is resolved to have him hanged, whether he will or not. The *beaux* were all upon the stage; the Marquis de Villeroi was in a masquerade dress; the Count de Guiche braced up like his own spirit; and all the rest looked like so many banditti. I have met the Count twice at M. de la R. F.'s, and always thought he had a good deal of wit: He appeared then indeed less on the reserve than he usually does. Our Abbe here, sends you word, that he has received the plan of Grignan, which he likes extremely, and takes a walk in it now and then by way of advance: He wishes he had the profile of the house; for my part, I shall content myself till I am altogether in possession of it, by being there. I have a thousand compliments for you from every one who has heard of the obliging manner in which the King spoke of M. de Grignan; Mad. de Verneuil was the first who came to me, she has been like to die. Farewell, my child, what shall I say to you about the love I have for you, and how much I interest myself in all that concerns you? I embrace the *admirable* Grignan, the *prudent* Coadjutor, and the *presump-*

tupus Adhemar: Was it not so I called them the other day?

LETTER CXXV.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 20 Jan. 1672.

I SEND you M. Rochefoucault's Maxims, revised and corrected with additions; it is a present to you from himself: Some of them I can make a shift to guess the meaning of; but there are others that, to my shame be it spoken, I cannot understand at all; God knows it will not be so with you. There is a dispute between the Archbishop of Paris and Rheims about a piece of ceremony; Paris will have Rheims ask leave of him, as his superior, which Rheims will not consent to. It is said, that these two Right Reverends will never agree till they are thirty or forty leagues asunder; if that is the case, they are both of them likely to continue as they are. This ceremony is the canonization of one Borgia a Jesuit. The whole opera-band is to exert itself on the occasion; the streets will be illuminated quite to the Rue St. Antoine; the people are all crazy about it: Old Merinville, however, is dead without having seen it.

Do not deceive yourself, child, by entertaining too good an opinion of my letters. The other day a confounded fellow, seeing the monstrous length of a letter I was writing to you, asked me very seriously, if I thought any body could possibly read it all: I trembled at the thought of it, but without any intention of amendment; for the correspondence I have with you is my well-being, the sole pleasure of my life; and every other consideration is but mean, when put in competition with this. I am a good deal uneasy about your brother: Poor lad! The weather is very cold: He lies in camp, and is still on the march to Cologne, for Lord knows how long! I was in hopes of seeing him this winter, and see whither he is got! After all, I find little Mademoiselle Adhemar must be the comfort of my old age: I wish you could but see how fond she is of me; how she calls after me, and hangs about me. She is not a beauty, but she is very agreeable, has a delightful

ful voice, and a skin as clear and white In short, I am excessively fond of her. You seem passionately fond of your little boy; I am very glad of it: We cannot have too many things to amuse us; real or imaginary, it does not signify.

To-morrow there is to be a ball at MADAME's. I saw a heap of jewels tossing about at MADEMOISELLE's, which put me in mind of past troubles: And yet would to Heaven we were at the same work again! For how can I be unhappy while you are with me? Alas! my whole life is one continued scene of sorrows and disappointments. Dear Monsieur Nicole! have pity on me; and teach me to bear, with patience, the orders of Providence. Farewell, my dearest child, I dare not say I adore you; but I cannot conceive any degree of love superior to mine: The kind and pleasing assurances you give me of yours, at once lighten and increase my sorrows.

L E T T E R CXXVI.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday 22 Jan. 1672, at 10 at night.

I N short, child, I have but just been able to leave Mademoiselle Adhemar's bedside to write to you. If you would not be jealous, I know not what I could not say to you of this sweet child: It is the most amiable little creature that ever was seen; she is so lively, so brisk, and has such a number of little pretty engaging ways, as make one quite delighted with her. I have been at MADEMOISELLE's to-day, who sent for me to come to her; MONSIEUR came in while I was there, and immediately became talking about you: He said, there was no-body capable of filling your place at the ball; and very obligingly added, that, nevertheless, your absence ought to be no hindrance to my going thither: This is just the thing I wanted. There was a good deal of talk about the war; it seems a determined thing. We are in expectation of the Queen of Spain's * answer; but let her say what she will, it

* Anna Maria of Austria, relict of Philip II. King of Spain, and mother to Charles II. who was not declared of age till the year 1672;

it is resolved, I find, that we must go to blows: If she declares for us, we fall upon the Dutch; if she takes the other side, then we shall seize on Flanders; and when once the uproar is begun, it will not be easily quieted. All this while our troops are upon their march towards Cologne. They say Mons^r. de Luxembourg is to open the scene. There are some commotions in Germany.

I have had a good deal of talk with M. d'Usez: Our Abbe mentioned to him in a very pretty manner, what he intended for the Abbe Grignan; this affair, however, must be kept secret; it all depends on Monsieur d'Usez, for it is thro' him only that we can obtain the proper requisites from his Majesty. I was told at my first coming in, that the Chevalier de Grignan * has the small-pox at M. d'Usez's house: This will be an unlucky accident for him, a great vexation to all who are his friends, and the occasion of a world of trouble to M. d'Usez, as it will entirely hinder him from acting in the present occasion we have for him. This is all of a piece with my usual ill fortune. You are continually praising me for my Letters, and yet I dare not commend yours, lest it should look like giving praise for praise; however, one must not lay one's self so far under restraint as to conceal the truth. Your thoughts and periods are many of them incomparable in their kind, and your style is altogether as perfect as one could wish; d'Hacqueville and I were quite charmed at some shining passages we observed in them: nor are you less excellent in your narrations; that passage relating to the King, your resentment against Lauzun and the Bishop, are each of them master-pieces in their way: Sometimes I shew a few of them to Mad. de Villars; but she generally fixes on the most tender parts, which presently bring tears into her eyes. Do not be afraid of my shewing your letters improperly; I know perfectly well who are worthy of that confidence, and what

1672; his dominions being, in the mean while, governed by the Queen-Mother, assisted by six counsellors of the deceased King's nomination.

* Charles-Philip Adhemar de Monteil, Chevalier or Knight of Malta, grand-nephew to James Adhemar de Monteil, Bishop of Usez

what may be told and what concealed. Listen, my dear, to an act of goodness and benevolence of your Royal Master's, it will serve to redouble your zeal for his service. I am told from very good authority, that the other day M. de Montausier * applied to the King for a small abbey for one of his friends, which was refused him; upon which he flung out of the presence in great discontent, and was heard to say, as he went out, that *none but ministers and mistresses had any interest in this country*. These words were not quite so decent; they were presently carried to the King's ears, who sent for Montausier back, and gently reprimanded him for his heat, putting him in mind of the little reason he had to complain; and the next day appointed Mad. de Crussol †, *Dame du Palais*. Let me tell you, this is the conduct of a Titus. You may judge whether the Governor was not greatly confounded, as well as the Bishop, who is indebted to you for his deputation: These are the most cruel methods of revenge. The King has reconciled the two Archbishops of Paris and Rheims. What shall I tell you next? My poor aunt is tormented with the severest pains, this gives me a great deal of concern, and lays me under an indispensable necessity of attending her.

LETTER CXXVII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 27 Jan. 1672.

NEVER did I see any thing more charming than your Letters; you declare yourself fully satisfied with the love and esteem I have for you, and express yourself in such a manner as must fill a heart like mine with the warmest tenderness: You seem well acquainted with all that that passes therein, and rightly perceive that most of my actions are in a view of being, in some measure, serviceable to you: You have put the true signification on my journey to Pomponne, as well as on the visits I made to M. le Camus; and trust me, my dearest

* Charles de Sainte Maure, Duke of Montausier, Governor to Louis Dauphin of France, and only son of Louis XIV.

† Mary-Julia de St. Maure, wife to Emanuel de Crussol, Duke of Uzez, and daughter to M. de Montausier.

dearest child, you are not at all mistaken; and while your sagacity and penetration do me such good offices with your heart, I have no reason to apprehend a diminution in your affection for me. I cannot but admire the sweetness of your temper, it is even beyond what my most sanguine hopes could have formed; if at any time it should appear to be otherwise, it should be forgiven for the sake of what it really is; and for the same reason should we forgive those, to whom you do not shew yourself sufficiently for them to discover all the good qualities you are possessed of, and who not being used to you or them, are apt to take you only by your words. But, my dear child, I am quite concerned at your being so extremely ignorant, as not once to entertain a thought of moving from where you are; indeed it hurts me: I think M. de Grignan much more reasonable in the thoughts he had about Marshal Bellefond's place, if he had resigned: What he proposed in that case was quite to my mind; but you saw how that affair turned out. I could wish that you would not lay aside all desire of coming nearer to us, if occasion should offer; for M. d'Uzez might, with a very good face, represent to his Majesty, how impossible it is not to be uneasy at being obliged to serve him at such a distance from his person, after having spent the greatest part of one's life about him, as M. de Grignan has done.

I desire, my dear, that you will frequently mention my aunt in your Letters, it will be some comfort to her in the midst of her torments. I have sent your Letters as directed; that to Mad. de la Fayette is extremely pretty. There was something very strange in the beginning of your last; you bid me guess what you had done the night before: I trembled from head to foot, and gave all over for lost; at last it proved to be, that you had sat up waiting for the courier that was to bring your Letters, and had very joyously been drinking your Royal Master's health: This gave me breath again, and I applaud you for your zeal, for in truth, it is impossible to praise the King too much; He is, if possible, grown more perfect within this last year. The court poets have already begun to sing his
praise;

praise; but, for my part, I am full as fond of prose, since every one is good at that.

I have been writing a long Letter to M. de Pomponne, relating to affairs in Provence, as M. d'Uzez cannot see him to talk with him about it, on account of the poor Chevalier's having the small pox: I dare not tell you in what a condition he is: His youth gives us some hopes; but I have had many uneasy moments on his account. The Countess de Fiesques' daughter, Mad. de Guerchi, died lately in the country, of a fright she got by a fire; She was eight months gone; she miscarried on it, and died presently afterwards. It shocks one to hear of such accidents. The young Duke de Rohan is at the point of death, of a violent fever he got with swallowing two glasses of brandy upon a debauch of wine. It is the seventh day of his disorder, and he is now judged to be past hopes of recovery. A fine prospect this for M. and Mad. de Soubise: As for me, after what I saw of him at our assembly, and the manner in which I knew he treated Mad. de Rouhan, I am quite easy about him. The Chancellor (*Seguier*) is dying: He has sent the seals to the King by the Duke de Coislin: A fine present indeed!— Good God! my dear, how do I wish for M. de Grignan to have some handsome place here about his Master's person, and let all your Provencals go while! Adhemar will make me hate them all heartily: It would be good enough to let them know what he thinks of them. Adieu, my dearest charmer, I think of nothing but coming to see you. I embrace my dear Grignan and his dearer wife.

LET-

To the Same.

*From the Convent of St. Mary in the Fauxbourg,
Friday 29 January, 1672, being the day of St.
Francis de Sales, and that on which you was mar-
ried: This is my first rhapsody; for I make a *
bout-de-l'an of every thing.*

HERE am I, my dear child, in that place, where-
in, of all places in the world, I wept the most
passionately and bitterly, that cruel day in which you
was separated from me: I tremble still, whenever I
think of it. I have been talking a full hour in the
garden, while all the sisters are at vespers, stunned
with the badness of the musick, which I therefore
thought much better to dispense with. My dear child,
I can no longer support this. My remembrance of you
destroys me on a thousand occasions: I thought I
should have died in this garden, where I have so often
seen you: I will not tell you the situation I am in:
Your rigid virtue is a stranger to the weakness of the
human heart. There are certain days, hours and mo-
ments, in which I am no longer mistress of myself:
I know my weakness, and do not pretend to a forti-
tude which I am not possessed of. So it is with me:
I am quite spent with grief; and, to compleat my
misery, here is a man, that I sent to the Chevalier de
Grignan, just returned, with such news as in no wise
helps to dry my tears. I imagine that he has dispos-
ed of what he had in favour of you: Keep it, I de-
sire you, whatever it may be, for his sake, and as a
mark of the esteem he had for you; and do not dispose
of it in the manner I know your generous mind would
lead you to do; for there is not one of your brothers-
in-law, who is not richer in proportion than you are.
I cannot express to you the concern this loss has given
me. What! shall such a little viper as R—— be
snatched

* Bout-de-l'an, a service in the Romish church that is read for a
deceased person at the year's end after his death: By this Mad. de
Sevigne means to say, that she is always recollecting some subject
of grief or concern.

snatched from the jaws of death, and this amiable youth, whose birth, person, temper, and honest heart can make his loss desirable or serviceable to no one, thus slip through our fingers! Had I been free to follow my own inclinations, I would never have left him: His disorder would have given me no apprehensions on my own account: but I cannot act in this respect as I would. You will have letters by this post, wrote since this of mine, which will give a more circumstantial account of his disorder: It is enough for me to feel it as I do.

It is reported that the Chancellor is dead. I cannot tell whether the seals will be disposed of before the post goes out. The Countess (*de Fiesque*) is in great affliction for the loss of her daughter: She is at St. Mary's de St. Denis. My dear child, one cannot take too much care of one's self, both during one's pregnancy and lying-in, nor take too much precaution against being in either of those conditions: I speak of nobody. Farewell, my dearest, I will make this a short letter: I cannot write in my present condition, and you have no occasion for my dulness; but, when it so happens that you receive a letter of an unconscionable length, thank yourself for it, and the manner in which you flatter me on the pleasure my long letters gave you: So that now you cannot for shame complain of them. I embrace you a thousand and a thousand times; and so return to my garden, and then to church for a little while, and then to visit the sick, who are as full of sorrows and vexation as myself.

Here is Sister Magdalen-Agnes coming in, who salutes you in the name of the Lord.

L E T T E R CXXIX.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 3 Feb. 1672.

I HAD a whole hour's conversation yesterday with M. de Pomponne. It would take more paper than I have by me, to tell you the joy we had in seeing each other again, and how many subjects we passed over for want of time to discuss them: In short, I found him the same he ever was; he is all perfection, and sets a much

much greater value on me than I deserve: His father has given him to understand, that he cannot more sensibly oblige him, than in doing every thing in his power to oblige me; though he says there are a thousand other reasons which would have induced him to do it, especially the consideration of my having the whole government of Provence in my hands: This is an admirable pretext for our having frequent business together. This was the only subject that had its full scope. I had opportunity of talking to him at large about the Bishop: He knows very well how to give attention to others, as well as to speak himself: He very readily gave credit to the description I drew of that prelate's manners, and did not seem very well pleased, that a man of his profession should take upon him the governor. I think I let nothing escape that was proper to be said on this occasion. He always inspires me with wit: His own is so perfectly easy and unconstrained, that one is insensibly led to repose an entire confidence in him, and to speak one's mind in the most happy terms. How many do I know that are quite the reverse of this! In short, dear child, without fishing for any more compliments, of which you are so very prodigal, I quitted him, full of joy in the thoughts of the service this connection may be of to you hereafter. We agreed to write to each other. He seems fond of my artless and simple style, though his own is that of eloquence itself. I sent you melancholy news of the poor Chevalier in my last; I have just received more of the same kind: He is alive still, but has received the extreme unction, and continues as bad as possible: His pock dries up as soon as it comes out. It is in, my opinion, the same sort as Mad. de St. Simon's. Ripert will tell you more of it than I can: I hear from him every day, and am in great uneasiness about him, and I find I love him more than I thought I did. The Princess of Conti † was seized this evening with a fit of an apoplexy: She is not dead yet; but remains quite insensible and speechless: They are torturing her a thousand ways to bring her to herself: There are a hun-

† Anna-Maria Martinozzi, Princess of Conti, died 4 Feb. 1672.

a hundred persons in her room, and three hundred in the house: There is weeping, and wailing, and great outcry: That is all I know of the matter at present. As to the Chancellor §, he is certainly dead, and made a truly noble exit; his bright understanding, his prodigious memory, his natural eloquence, and eminent piety, remained in their full lustre to the very moment of his dissolution. The simile of the torch, that shines brightest when nearest being extinguished, is verified in him. Mascaron † assisted him in his last moments, and was astonished at the answers he made, and the number of quotations he drew from the holy writings; he paraphrased the *Miserere*, and drew tears from the eyes of all the by-standers: He quoted passages from the scriptures, and the writings of the fathers, with greater readiness than any of the Bishops that attended him: In short, his death was one of the most glorious and extraordinary things imaginable; and what is still more so, is his leaving but very little wealth behind him: He was as rich the day he entered into employment, as that on which he died: It is certain that he provided for his family; but that was not providing for himself: In fine, he has left no more than 70000 livres a year; and what is that for a man who had been forty years Chancellor, and, besides that, had a handsome fortune of his own? Death discovers many things; and I did not learn what I tell you from any of his own family. They are much visited. Mad. de Coulanges and I held our ranks there. Mad. de Vernueil* is so ill, that she sees nobody. It is not yet known who will have the seals.

I desire you will put the Coadjutor in mind of answering M. de Agen † on the affair he wrote to him about: I am plagued to death about it. It is very wrong for a Bishop to be so regardless of his reputation. I always put off writing to this same Coadjutor from day

§ Peter Segurier, who died the 28th of January, 1672.

† Julius Mascaron of the Oratory, a very celebrated preacher: He was afterwards made Bishop of Tulle, and from thence translated, in 1679, to the Bishoprick of Agen.

* Mad. de Vernueil was daughter to the Chancellor Segurier.

† Claude Joli, Bishop of Agen: He had been Curate of St. Nicolas des Champs at Paris.

day to day: I think I am infected with his irregularities: I find fault with him, and, at the same time, do the like myself. Farewell, my dearest child, your girl is a sweet creature: I amuse myself greatly with her: She grows handsomer and handsomer every day.

LETTER CXXX.

To the Same.

*Paris, Friday 5 February, 1672. This day
thousand years I was married.*

I WAS told for certain this morning, that the Chevalier was somewhat better: I have great hopes from his youth: Pray heaven restore him to our wishes. As to the Princess of Conti, she died about seven or eight hours after I had made up my packet; that is to say, yesterday about four o'clock in the morning, without once recovering her senses, or uttering a single intelligible word: She now and then called for *Cecile*, who was one of her women, and cried, My God! They were in hopes that she was coming to her senses, but she said no more; and expired with a great cry, and with such violent convulsions, that she left the marks of her fingers in the arm of the woman who held her. No words can describe the desolation and horror that prevailed in her apartment. The Duke, the Princess of Conti, Mad. de Longueville, Mad. de Gamache, all wept as if their hearts would break: Mad. de Gesvres had recourse to swoonings, and Mad. de Brissac roared as loud as she could, and threw herself upon the floor: In short, they were obliged to turn them out, for they were past knowing what they did; they rather over-acted their parts: Who strives to prove too much, proves nothing, says some one, I know not whom. However, there was an universal grief. The King seemed a good deal affected, and made her panegyrick, by saying, that she was more considerable for her virtue, than the greatness of her birth and station. By her will, she has left the education of her children to Mad. de Longueville. The Prince is appointed their tutor. She has left 20,000 crowns to the poor, and as much among her servants: She has ordered her body to be interred in her own parish, and without the least

least pomp, like any other common woman. I do not know whether all these little matters come *a propos* or not: But you will have me write long letters, and so you must bear with them, and take it for your pains. I saw this pious Princess yesterday after she was laid out: She was greatly disfigured, by the rough treatment she had met with: her mouth was strangely mangled, two of her teeth was broke; and they had burned her on the head: So that, in short, if people recover from a fit of the apoplexy, they must be miserable spectacles all the rest of their lives. Her death affords subject for a number of excellent reflections: It would have been most dreadful to any other but herself; but to her it was the most happy that could be desired, since she felt nothing from it, and was more-over always prepared. It has even affected Brancas.

I forgot to mention to you in my letter of the day before yesterday, that I met Canaples at *Notre Dame*, who, after a thousand compliments and good wishes for M. de Grignan and you, told me, that Marechal Villeroi had assured him, that M. de Grignan's letters had been greatly admired in the council; that they had been read with pleasure, and that the King said, he never saw any thing better, wrote. I promised him to let you know this. The lady, whose name I did not mention to you in my last, was Mad. de Louvois. *A propos*. M. de Louvois took his seat at the council-table four days ago, as one of the King's Ministers. His Majesty is to sign to-morrow in the presence of six counsellors of State, and our masters of the requests. No one knows how long this will last. This is a fine post for his Majesty, and he will, I dare say, acquit himself very well in it. I have had a thousand extravagant thoughts in my head about the Chancellor: I cannot think where I got them, in the condition I have been in for these two or three days past. The evening, the day, and the day following your departure from hence last year, have run so strongly in my head, and so affected my mind and spirits, that I cannot keep the tears from my eyes; and yet nothing can be more silly than to grieve for a thing that is past our power

to remedy : It is destroying ourselves to no purpose, and is just as ridiculous as forming wishes, and building castles in the air. You are too solid to waste your time in such trifles ; but they please me. I am charmed, my dearest child, to find you take such pleasure in my letters, though I cannot think them so entertaining as you say they are. I have sent you four reams of paper, you know on what conditions : I hope to have the greatest part of it back again between this and Easter : After that, I shall aspire to more substantial joys.

L E T T E R CXXXI.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 10 Feb. 1672.

AT length, my dear child, after a multitude of false alarms and vain hopes, we have lost the poor Chevalier. I must confess to you, that I have been greatly affected with the death of this excellent young man, which happened Saturday the 6th Feb. at four in the morning. If a truly christian end can administer cause of comfort to christians, we have the greatest room for consolation, in the assurance of his being happy. Never did any one shew more resignation, a greater love for God, nor a fuller portion of grace : He would not have accepted life, had it been in the power of any one to have insured it to him : So great was his confidence in the mercies of his God, that there is the greatest reason to believe, that he felt such a disposition of soul, as he would not have willingly hazarded on any account. He lost a great quantity of blood : he was very much against being bled the last time, which was the eleventh ; but the physicians overruled him ; and he told them, that, since it must be so, he gave it up, but saw they were resolved to kill him in form. The death of M. de Guise, which was thought to have proceeded from want of being bled, has occasioned the loss of many lives since. The poor youth was ill ever since his journey to St. Germain : He was taken with a violent vomiting and looseness at his first going into waiting, and took something to stop it which had the desired effect ; but, in about a week after,

after, as he was returning to Paris, he was seized with a fever and the small-pox, which came out with such an universal corruption, that those who attended him could hardly bear the chamber. Thus did Providence see fit to cut short his life in the very flower of his age. This is but a melancholy relation to send you; but when one is truly affected, one does not strive to conceal it from one's self by a pretended ignorance. I should not join any other subjects in this letter. However, when you have a little dried your tears, you may read what follows, and there you will find the resolution we have taken with regard to your affairs.

We did not receive the letter you sent us by the courier till yesterday: It was this I was so much in pain for; but now there are none lost. I was near an hour with the Bishop of Uzez. The Abbe was with me. We had a good deal of talk together, and I am more than ever satisfied with the prudence and good sense of that Prelate: You have nothing to do but send him the first thoughts that come into your head, and an hour or two's reflection will be sufficient for him to see all that is proper to be done or left undone. I shewed him the letter I had received from M. Pomponne: I must manage so as to bring about a conversation between M. d'Uzez and him. The very name of poor M. d'Uzez is pestilential* at present: He dares not appear at court, nor can he get to speak with M. Colbert: This ruins us. It is his opinion, that we should not be too hasty in the affair you wrote to him about; because, if it does really belong to the deputies, we should not give them all the right side of the question, and keep the wrong to ourselves; for, as they do not want for cunning, they will be sure to make the most of every favourable circumstance, and take care to conceal the rest. When people, who are in the wrong, happen to have some little matter of fact on their side, they turn and wind it a thousand ways, till they become perfectly insupportable: And herein you will find the good Bishop's prudence of the greatest service to you.

* On account of the small-pox having been in his house.

The Marquis de Villeroi * has received orders to retire from court, on account of his bad behaviour : That is all the King said about it. This affair is variously talked of, and several people are blamed for it. One thing certain is, that Vardes † will not be much displeased at it. Lyons is the place of his exile, which will not be very disagreeable to him, provided it does not continue too long. I am so well convinced of the concern you are in for the poor Chevalier, that I shall reserve for some other time a thousand little *bagatelles*, which would be quite out of season at present.

Your maxim is a divine one : M. de la R. F. cannot think but he made it himself. The words are very happily disposed ; but how comes it about that you did not understand his ? Alas ! how is there any living without folly, that is to say, without fancy ? and is not that man completely foolish, who thinks to shew his wisdom by debarring himself of all amusement and diversion ? You will be of our opinion when you come to think of it. The Abbe has paid the last duties to the poor Chevalier : I should have discharged mine ; but they would have stoned me if I had gone near the house ; and so I contented myself with going to weep with M. d'Uzez, who is in another house. I am very uneasy to hear of your being at Aix, on account of the small-pox having been there so lately. Good God, what a sad thing it is to love so well ! I can perceive even from hence, the tranquil and peaceable situation your poor dear heart was in at Lambesc, where you indulged yourself on the bread and water of indolence : but now you are got back to your *ragouts* again. There is nothing ridiculous in your comparison ; it would make one laugh indeed, if one was in a humour for laughing ; but that is not the case at all times. Alas ! my dear child, it is now above a year since I saw you : How deeply do I feel this long absence ! and you, my dearest love ! Do you not feel it a little now and then ?

Monsieur

* The last Marechal of that name.

† It was the Marquis de Villeroi that occasioned the rupture between the Countess de Soissons and M. de Vardes.

Monsieur DE COULANGES.

I shall not waste my time and yours, charming Countess, in ill-timed compliments; but content myself with assuring you, that no one can be more sincerely afflicted at the death of our poor Chevalier than myself: I was so happy in his acquaintance while in Provence, and promised myself so much satisfaction in the continuance of it here and elsewhere, that his loss has gone very near to me. What a subject of meditation is here for young people, as well as for those in a more advanced age! There is no trusting to either youth or good health; we are all alike mortal, and the day and the hour no man knows. I shall conclude with this common-place piece of morality, and at the same time request you, my charming Countess, to permit me to embrace you with the most sincere and tender respect.

Madame DE COULANGES.

I am greatly afflicted with the death of the Chevalier de Grignan; but not to add to the trouble you are already in, by that of reading a sorry letter, I shall content myself, dear Madam, with desiring you to be assured, that no one can be more sensible to what regards you; and that I take the greatest pleasure in the hopes of seeing you this summer: I am determined to go to Grignan, tho' I should be obliged to leave the Marquis de Villeroi at Lyons; think of that. Adieu, dear Madam, it is a delightful thing to live with Mad. de Seville.

L E T T E R CXXXII.

To the Same.

Paris Friday 12 January, 1672.

I CANNOT but be in great pain for you, my dear, when I think on the concern the death of the poor Chevalier must have given you: You saw him not long ago, and that is enough to make you regard him greatly, as it furnished you with an opportunity of knowing the many good qualities heaven had endowed him with. It is certain, that no one could be better born, have a more just and amiable way of think-

ing, a more pleasing countenance, or be fonder of you than he was; all which could not fail of rendering him infinitely dear to you, and every one that knew him. I can easily conceive your grief, by what I feel myself; but shall endeavour to amuse you a little with some things relating to your own affairs, and with what passes in our world. I have had a long conversation with M. le Camus, who is so much in our interest, that he gives me his advice in several points: He is greatly disgusted with any thing that looks like double-dealing; and as his own conduct is so much the reverse, he the more easily enters into our views, which he knows to be founded in uprightness and sincerity, which should never be given up on any account; it will always be in fashion. The world may be deceived for a little time; but knaves will be found out in the long-run, I am persuaded.

The Marquis de Villeroi is actually set out for Lyons, as I told you. The King ordered the Marshal de Crequi to tell him to withdraw himself to some distance from the court; it is supposed on account of something he had said at the Countess's (*de Soissons*): In short, there are various conjectures. The king asked MONSIEUR, who was just returned from Paris, what the talk was there? *Monsieur* replied, All about the poor Marquis, Sire. And what about him? said the King: They say, Sire, that he is in disgrace for having spoken in behalf of an unfortunate person. What unfortunate person? said the King. The Chevalier de Lorraine, answered MONSIEUR. And do you still think of this Chevalier de Lorraine? said the King: Have you really a regard for him? Should you be obliged to any one who would restore him to you? Believe me, Sire, replied MONSIEUR, it would be doing me the greatest pleasure I ever received in my life. Well then, said his Majesty, I myself will make you this present; a courier has been dispatched to him two days ago; he will be soon here, and then I shall give him to you, and desire that you would look upon yourself as obliged to me for it the remainder of your life, and love and esteem him for my sake; I shall do more yet, he shall be appointed
Field-

Field-Marechal in the army I am to command. Upon this, MONSIEUR flung himself at the King's feet, and for a long time embraced his knees, and kissed his hand with inexpressible joy. His Majesty raised him up, and said, This is not a way for brothers to embrace; and then embraced him in the most cordial and affectionate manner. This story is absolutely true, it comes from the best authority; so you may now make your own reflections upon it, draw proper inferences, and redouble your present worthy dispositions for the service of your Royal Master. They say, that MADAME* is certainly to go, and that several ladies of quality are to accompany her. Sentiments are various at MONSIEUR's: Some have faces of an ell long, others are much contracted with smiling; the Chevalier de Beuvron's is, it seems, of an immeasurable length. Monsieur de Nouailles is to be recalled too, and serve as Lieutenant-general, with M. de Schomberg, in the army to be commanded by MONSIEUR. The king told the Marechal Villeroi, that it was necessary to make his son do a little penance; but that the punishments of this life did not last for ever. You may depend upon the truth of all this. There is nothing I hate so much as false reports, and am as fond of those that are true: If you should happen to have the same taste for them, you are undone; for you have them here out of number.

La Marans came to Mad. de Longueville the other day all alone, and in a veil; she met with great flights from every one there: Langlade has sent you word how he rubbed her up upon some ridiculous speeches she made him some time ago, and wished for you to have been behind the door: Would to heaven you had! Mad. de Brissac was at Mad. de Longueville's at the same time, and with all the appearance of the most excessive grief: But unluckily on the Count de Guiche falling into conversation with her she quite forgot her part, and was as much out as in the mad scene the day

* The Princess Henrietta, sister of King Charles II. of England, to whom she was then going over on a secret negotiation. See Voltaire's Age of Lewis XIV. Vol. II..

of the Princess's death*, where just as she would have lost all knowledge, she quite forgot her cue, and took notice of every body that came in.

Farewell, my dearest lovely child: Do you not think our separation long? It affects me in such a manner that it would be more than I could bear, were it not for the pleasure I take in loving you as I do, in spite of all the misery attending it.

LETTER CXXXIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 17 February, 1672.

MONSIEUR de Coulanges and I gave a very handsome dinner to the President de Bouc; and Monsieur and Mad. de Valavoire: the Bishop of Uzez, and Adhemar were of the party: But only hear what an accident befel us: The President, after having given his word to be with us, came to excuse himself, having urgent business at St. Germain's. We thought we should have hanged ourselves; however, we did as well as we could. Mad. de la Valavoire brought Buzanval with her; but the President was the chief object of our desires. The dinner was good, delicate, and magnificent: In short, it was an irreparable loss: De Bouc may return perhaps; but the dinner will not. Adhemar was greatly afflicted to hear of his poor brother's death at his arrival; I received him with an aching heart: He went to lie at St. Germain's, and promised me to call upon me at his return, and have some talk about you. It is a conversation I long for. You say, that I weep for what I am the mistress of preventing: Indeed, my dear, I cannot help weeping sometimes; but I would not have you suppose, that I am so wholly the mistress of setting out when I will: I would do it to-morrow, with all my soul; but then your brother has a great occasion for me at present; so that I cannot stir till Easter; therefore you see, child, that one may be mistress, yet not set out, and continue to weep. You will see the Chevalier de Lorraine before us. Monf. de Boufflers §, Mad. du Plessis's

* The Princess de Conti. See the preceding letter.

§ Francis Count of Boufflers, elder brother to the late Duke of that name.

Plessis's son-in-law, dropt down dead as he was going out of one room into another, without any farther ceremony: I saw his widow a-while ago, who, I believe, will be quickly comforted. Monsieur Ifarn, a great wit, is dead too after much the same manner. I cannot help being uneasy at your being at Aix, while the air thereabouts is so full of the small-pox: Let me recommend to you to avoid at least all crowds and publick places: It is a most dreadful disorder. Your daughter has just such a complexion as Mad. de Villeroi had, a clear white, and a beautiful red, quite distinct from each other; her eyes are a fine blue; her hair black, and a turn of a face and a chin like wax-work; her lip grows less every day: Moreover, she never cries, but is all sweetness and good-humour: She calls about her, and can speak five or six words already: In short, she is a lovely creature, and I love her as well. Adhemar tells me wonders of your little boy. Mad. de Guenegaud pressed me very much to make you and the Coadjutor her compliments of condolence on the death of the Chevalier, so hold her quit for that. I have just learned that Adhemar has had a glorious conversation with M. Colbert; he will tell you all about it. The other day as they were talking before the King about Languedoc, they came to talk of Provence, which led to the mention of M. de Grignan; and a great deal was said in his favour: Monsieur de Jansson joined the general opinion, and afterwards took occasion to mention his natural indolence of temper: Upon which, the Marquis de Charot took him up, and answered very prettily: "But, Sir, M. de Grignan is far from being indolent, when his Majesty's service is in question; and no one could have exerted themselves more, or done better, than he did in the last assembly; this I know to be fact from very good authority." These are the people that are to be managed, and let into the true light of our affairs. Every body concurred in the truth of what he said. I shall mention the *Adone* to honest Chapelain, and load him with honour in telling him he is remembered by you. I always deliver your compliments,

and they are returned in the most affectionate manner. Your poor brother writes very frequently to me, and I to him. This war makes me almost mad, when I think of the danger he must run at the opening of the campaign. How thick strewed with wormwood is the path of life? My dearest child, adieu: I embrace you.

Monsieur DE COULANGES.

I say nothing; but I think the more for it. We shall be at Lyons about Easter: Mad. de Coulanges and I are going there to see Mademoiselle du Gue * married, who, without looking out any farther, has pitched upon M. de Bagnols, whom you know, and who is her cousin german: They have nothing to reproach each other with in point of birth; and as to fortune, Bagnols has five and twenty thousand good livres a year, which is no such bad matter, is it? I hope we shall be at Lyons to do the honours of the place to your mother, in her way to Provence. Farewel, fair Countess, I love you still with the same unalterable affection. M. d'Adhemar told me, he had brought M. de Grignan's picture with him; but I have not yet seen it.

L E T T E R CXXXIV.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday 19 February, 1672.

I SHALL go on Sunday to St. Germain's with Mad. de Coulanges, to have a little discourse with M. Pomponne; I think it quite necessary: I shall give you an exact account of what passes, that M. de Grignan may have more reason than ever to call me his little minister. Adhemar has already done wonders on his part; and M. d'Uzez no less on his: In a word, I do not think we are in any danger of being surpris'd, as we are already so well prepared. But what shall I say to you about that charming picture M. de Grignan has sent to M. de Coulanges? It is very beautiful, and a great likeness; that of Le Fevre is mere daubing to it. I have made a vow of never leaving Pro-

* Sister to Madame de Coulanges.

Provence till I have one exactly the same, and another of you: There is no money I would so willingly lay out. But pray, my dear, take care, and do not be changed for the worse. Here is poor Madame de Guerchi lately dead, and from nothing but being worn out with child-bearing. I cannot but reverence those husbands who get rid of their wives thro' excess of love and tenderness. Guitaut and I have had a great deal of talk about a certain friend of ours, remarkable for his great prudence, and of whom he stands so much in awe: He dares not mention to you himself an accident which is reported to have happened to him, which is neither better nor worse than being passionately in love with the Marechal's little one-eyed daughter. It is all darts and flames, as I am told: He denies it as he would murder; but his actions betray him: He is sensible how ridiculous it is to be in love with such a ridiculous object; and is as much ashamed and confounded as any one can be; but, in short, the charming eye has smitten him:

*Cet œil si charmant qui n'eut jamais
Son pareil en divins attraits.*

*That charming eye which never yet
Its match for heav'nly beauty met.*

Poor Guitaut dares not inform you of this himself; I tell it you as a secret, and desire you to keep it as such: But, in the mean time, who can help admiring the wonderful powers of the orvietan on this occasion? About two hours ago I saw M. de Gordes, M. d'Uzez, and Adhemar. I am quite in Provence. I had a good deal of chat with Adhemar, who assures me, that I am beloved by you, which is the greatest joy I can have in this world. I am delighted with your temper, fortitude of mind, reason, good conduct: In short, I cannot forbear crying out to him:

*De grace montrez moins a mes sens desolez
La grandeur de ma perte, et ce que vous valez.*

*Ab! cease to paint to my distracted senses
The greatness of my loss, and of her worth.*

We

We never know when to have done talking of you : Your friend Mad. de Vaudemont is soon to be very happy ; I have this from the same hand as Adhemar : It is a secret as yet ; but there is a set of obliging people in the world, who love to let one into a secret a day or two before the time, and others again are so very close, there is no living with them. What sweets can we taste in a friendship so loaded with thorns as this is ? It is crushed, it is stifled in its birth. Guitaut and I had made a whole treatise upon this yesterday between us ; and I came to a resolution never to form a friendship under such disguises : Adieu, my ever amiable. I am going to sup at M. de la R. F.'s, which obliges me to make my letter so short.

L E T T E R CXXXV.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 24 February, 1672.

I RECEIVED your two letters both at a time ; I cannot see you in such concern without finding my own renewed : I perceive that you are truly afflicted, and you have so much reason to be so, that I cannot say any thing to you against it. I have felt all that you feel now, and the death of the poor Chevalier was not the first occasion that I took of expressing my sense of his many virtues : I pity you for having seen him last autumn, it is a fresh addition to your grief : M. d'Uzez will inform you of what the King said to him on the occasion, in which the whole family is greatly concerned. He was much regretted in those regions of royalty ; and the Queen spoke of him to me with a great deal of goodness ; but all this will not restore that excellent young man to us. You have so great a love for all M. de Grignan's family, that I dare say you are to the full as afflicted at this death as himself.

I dined yesterday, in company with several Provençals, at M. de Valavoire's : He and his wife are the best people in the world : I am sorry you have her not with you ; she is very sensible and good-natured ; I am greatly pleased with her. There were Mess. de
Bouc,

Bouc, d'Oppede, de Gordes, de Souliers, Mad. de Buzanval, M. d'Uzez, and M. and Mad. de Coulanges ; your health went round, and happy were they who could begin it. We had a great deal about the handsome reception you gave the Duke d'Etrees ; he has written wonders about it to his children. Mad. de Rochefort does nothing but exclaim against you, since she has heard that you have wrote to her cousin without sending her a line. I would advise you to write to her, and endeavour to appease her at any rate. The eternal stay you tell me you are like to make where you are, goes to my very heart : I am not mistress of such a strength of reasoning as yours, so that the cruel reflections arising from hence almost destroy me : But I must cut short here.——

Mad. de Villars sends her compliments to you and M. de Grignan, and the Coadjutor. M. Chapelain was in raptures at receiving the remembrance you sent him ; he says that the *Adone* * is enchanting in some places ; but of an insupportable length. The canto of comedy (*gli Spettacoli*) is admirable, there is the story of a nightingale, who stretches his little throat to drown the notes of a lutanist ; at length comes and perches just over his head, where he strains himself till he falls dead at the man's feet, and is buried in the body of the lute. This description is extremely beautiful. M. and Mad. de Coulanges send you a thousand kind remembrances : They are greatly taken up with the wedding : They set off at Easter, and will be at Lyons to receive me, as I shall at Grignan to return them the compliment. My aunt † continues very bad ; she returns you thanks for all your kindnesses ; and the Abbe is ever your most devoted.

LETTER CXXXVI.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday Evening 26 Feb. 1672.

I HAVE received the letter you sent me for M. Valette ; whatever comes from you cannot but be dear to me : I will make him have Pelisson for his
Rap-

* An Italian Poem of the Cavaliero Marini's.

† Mad. de la Trousse.

Rapporteur, to know whether he is qualified for a Master of the Requests ; for I cannot believe it unless I see it.

Poor Madame * continues still at the point of death ; her care is very extraordinary. But do you know we are all in an uproar at Paris ? The courier is arrived from Spain, and brings word, that the Queen is not only determined to abide by the Pyrenean treaty, by which she is obliged not to turn her arms against her allies ; but is likewise resolved to protect the Dutch with all her power ; so that here is a terrible war upon the point of breaking out ; and for what ? mere child's play. We shall attack Flanders, the Dutch will join the Spaniards : God keep us from having the Swedes, the English, and the Germans upon our hands too. I am just distracted with this news. Oh that some angel would descend from heaven to quiet these turbulent spirits, and restore peace among them !

Our Cardinal (*de Retz*) is still very bad : I do him all the little services in my power : He has a great love for you, and believes you have the same for him. Madame de Courcelles' † affair furnished matter of great mirth to the wits. The prison fees are considerably raised since it is known that she is to do penance : She is handsomer than ever ; and eats, drinks, and makes as merry as the best of them : All she complains of is, not having met with one lover while she was in prison. I will inform you more fully of the affair you wrote to me about the other day ; for I do not think that either the Count de Guiche or M. de Longueville are sufficiently at the bottom of it ; however, I will write to you more at large. M. Boufflers has

* The Dowager MADAME ; Margaret of Lorraine, second wife to Gaston Duke of Orleans. She died the 3 April following the date of this letter.

† One of the most beautiful women of her time : Her name was Maria-Sidonia de Leoncourt ; her father was Joachim de Leoncourt, Marquis de Marolles, Governor of Thionville, and Lieutenant General of the King's forces : Her mother was Isabella-Clara-Eugenia de Cromberg, an illustrious house in Germany. She was the wife of Charles de Champlais, Marquis of Courcelles.

has killed a man since his death *: The affair was this: They were carrying him about a league from Boufflers to inter him: The corpse was on a bier in a coach; his own curate attended it: The coach over-sets, and the bier falling upon the Curate's neck choaked him. Yesterday there was another person overset in returning in his coach from St. Germain's, and died upon the spot.

Mad. Scarron sups with us almost every evening, and is the most agreeable companion imaginable. She takes great delight in playing with your little girl: She thinks her rather pretty than otherwise. The little creature yesterday called the Abbe Tetu *her papa*: He denied the relation for very substantial reasons, and we believed him. I embrace you, my love. I told you so many things in my last, that I think I have nothing left to say to you in this. I assure you that I should be at no loss for a subject, was I to go about to tell you all my sentiments concerning you.

LETTER CXXXVII.

To the Same.

Livri, Tuesday 1 March, 1672.

I BEGIN my letter this day, my dear, being Shrove-Tuesday, and shall finish it to-morrow. If you are at St. Mary's, I am at our Abbe's, who has been a little out of order these two days past: It is nothing to give one any apprehension, but I had rather he were entirely well. Mad. de Coulanges, and Mad. Scarron, would fain have taken me with them to Vincennes; and M. de R. F. wanted me to come to his house to hear Moliere read one of his plays; but, in truth, I refused it all with a great deal of pleasure: And here am I at my duty, writing to you with a mixture of joy and grief: Indeed it is a long time since I wrote to you last. So you are retired to St. Mary's! resolved not to lose the least part of the grief you are in for the death of the poor Chevalier: You are for indulging it in its full extent, without having any thing to call you off. This application

† This accident gave birth to a fable of La Fontaine's called The Curate and Death.

to sorrow, this endeavour of yours to make the most of affliction, looks as if you were not so much disconcerted as others are when occasions offer of exerting melancholy. Let your own heart answer for me. I find you have gone through the riot of the Carnaval without any accident: Be as careful of yourself in a small-pox air: I am in more care for you than you are for yourself. Your reflections upon hope are most excellent: Had they been made by Bourdaloue, all the world would have heard of them. Your wonders do not make so great a noise: *The unhappiness of good fortune* * is so charmingly said that we cannot too much admire a pen that can express such things. You say all that can be said concerning hope; and I am so much of your opinion, that I know not whether I ought to go to Provence or not, so great is my apprehension for being obliged to leave it again. I already see how the time will then gallop; I know its way: But, after all these fine reflections, my heart joins in the same conclusion with yours, and pants for nothing so earnestly as the moment of my departure from hence. I am even willing to flatter myself with the hope of something or other happening that I may bring you back with me; but there is no talking of these things at such a distance; but be assured, that no consideration of house or goods shall weigh any thing with me: I have not a thought but for you, and in what manner I am to proceed to get somewhat nearer to you: This holds the first place in my mind; all other things follow at hazard.

I have given your letters to the Fauxbourg folks: They are admirably well wrote, and the reflection that is there of M. de Grignan's is admired by them all. We have oftentimes thought the same thing; but you have given it a dress fit to appear in public with. I did not tell them your opinion of the maxim which you think resembles a song, though I am entirely of your way of thinking: I will endeavour to learn whether any thing more was meant, than the praise of fancy or the

* Le malheur du bonheur.

the passions; if so, it is repugnant to strict philosophy; if not, it requires a clearer explanation.

I supped yesterday evening at Gourville's: There were R. F. la Fayette, du Plessis, and Tournais, all waiting the arrival of the great Pomponne; but the service of that Master, which is so justly dear to you both, prevented him from joining the flower of his friends: He has a great deal of business upon his hands, on account of the number of dispatches they are sending to all parts, and the great preparations making to begin the war.

The Archbishop of Thoulouse* has been made a Cardinal: The news of it came just as M. de Laon† was in expectation of a hat for himself, which has given his friends a good deal of concern. They will have it, that M. de Laon has sacrificed his own interest to the service of the King, and that, rather than betray those of his country, he had slighted Cardinal Altieri, who had in return served him this trick: They are in hopes he may yet have his rank; but it may be a long time first, and it is always disagreeable to be in expectation.

Benzerade said, and I think pleasantly enough, that the Chevalier de Lorraine's return would be matter of joy to his friends, and sorrow to his creatures; for not one of them all stuck by him during his disgrace.

I have learned, for a certainty, that it depends wholly on us to have a peace. The Queen of Spain's answer was not so positive as was reported: She only declared, that she would abide by the treaty of peace, which admits of her assisting her allies whenever they stand in need of it. It is the same with regard to the Portuguese: They have promised not to assist the Dutch, but will not give it under their hand: This is the whole affair: If we insist upon their signing, all is lost; if we do not, we shall quickly have a peace, provided the Spaniards do not declare against us. Time will clear up all this. Farewell, my dearest and

* Peter Bonzi, afterwards Archbishop of Narbonne.

† César d'Estrees, Bishop of Laon: He was declared Cardinal some little time afterwards: He had been Cardinal in petto from the August of the foregoing year.

and best loved child; I am afraid that your great fondness for solitude will affect your eyes and spirit.

L E T T E R CXXXVIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Tuesday 4 March, 1672.

YOU say then, my dear child, that you cannot possibly keep hatred alive for so long a time: You are in the right of it: It is much the same with me; but then guess what I do in the room of it? Why I can love as strongly and for as long a time, a certain person that you know. You seem to give way to a negligence that gives me a great deal of concern: You seldom want an excuse for it, it is so much your natural inclination; but, you know, I always found fault with you for it, and do so still. One might make an excellent mean of Mad. du Fresnoy and you: Both of you are in the extreme; but, certainly, yours may better be borne with than hers. I wonder sometimes at the many nothings that drop from my pen: I never curb it; but am extremely happy that such trifles amuse you. They would be very disagreeable to many people; but I beg you will not regret the want of them when you have me with you, or I shall grow jealous of my own letters.

The dinner that M. de Valavoire gave, entirely eclipsed ours, not for the quantity, but extreme delicacy of the dishes. My dear child, how you look! Mad. de la Fayette will scold you without mercy. For God's sake dress your head to-morrow: Excessive negligence eclipses beauty, and you carry your dullness beyond bounds. I have made your compliments: Those that are sent you in return surpass in number the stars in the sky; *a-propos*: of stars. La Gouville was the other day at Mad. de St. Lou's, who has just lost her old page. La Gouville, among other things, was talking of her *star* †, and her star did this, and her star did that: At length Segrais, who was there, rousing himself as if he had

† It is a custom in France for people of quality to give their lacqueys and pages names of their own choosing, as La Fleur, (Flower), Jasmin, (Jessamine), &c. The page here mentioned by Mad. de Gouville was called Etoile, (star).

had been asleep, says to her, " Dear Madam, do you think you have a star to yourself? I hear nothing but people talking about their stars. Why, do you know, Madam, that there are but one thousand and twenty-two in all? How do you think then every one can have a star to themselves?" This was spoke in such a comical manner, and with so serious a countenance, that it put an end to all their sorrow in a trice. Your letters were given to Mad. de Vaudemont by d'Hacqueville. To tell you the truth, I see him very seldom now. The great fish swallow up the little ones, you know. Farewell, my dearest love: I am getting Bajazet, and la Fontaine's Fables, to send you for your amusement.

L E T T E R CXXXIX.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday evening 9 March, 1672.

TALK to me no more of my letters, I beseech you, my dear. I have just received one from you that carries every thing before it: Nothing can be more elegant and sprightly, more full of strength and tenderness; and the style is so just and concise, that it cannot fail of pleasing to the highest degree, even if one did not love you in the manner that I do. I should tell you how fond I am of your letters more frequently than I do, were it not for fear of being tiresome; but whether I tell you so or not, I am always delighted with them. Mad. de Coulanges is much so with some passages I shewed to her, and which it was impossible to keep to myself: There is a vein of good humour and sprightliness that runs through the whole, which gives it a fine effect.

You was for a long time quite buried in melancholy: I was a good deal uneasy about it; but I find the game of the goose has put you into spirits again. By the bye, I wish you never had played at any other game: A continual run of ill luck is very provoking and disagreeable: There is no bearing to be the continual butt of fortune: The superiority of others over us, though in trivial things, never fails to pique our pride and give us vexation; as is most excellently observed by Nicole. I

am

am very angry with fortune, and am more than ever convinced of her blindness by the manner in which she has treated you.

I now send you the symptoms of love, which you desired of me. Imprimis, To be the foremost on all occasions to deny it: To affect an air of great indifference, which is a sure mark of the contrary: The observation of others, who can see better than one's self, backed by the publick voice: An entire suspension of all actions in the globular machine: A neglect of every wonted concern, and care to attend to one single one: A continual satyrising against old people, who are so foolish as to be in love. Such nonsense! I must be an idiot! What, I in love! And with a young woman too! Very pretty indeed! To be sure, it would become me mighty well! I had rather have an arm or a leg broke! And then the heart makes answer, Indeed what you say is very true; but, for all that, you are in love. You tell us all these fine things: Your reflections are doubtless very just: You abound with excellent reasons: At the same time you are sick, you weep, you are out of all temper, and you are in love. If you should drive M. de Vence * to this pass, I desire, my dear, you will make me your confidante: In the mean while, you cannot have a more agreeable correspondent. The Prelate is of a very distinguished understanding and merit; and one of the greatest geniuses of his age. You say you admire his verse; taste then his prose: He is equally excellent in both, and truly deserves to be ranked in the number of your friends. You very merrily quote the example of the lady, who was fond of turning the heads of all the monks that came in her way; but it would be a much more glorious thing for you to do this by M. de Vence, who is so famous for the goodness, clearness and excellence of his: In him you may say you have found a real treasure in Provence: Make the most of this, and for the rest trust to fortune.

I charge you, my dear child, not to send me your picture, if you still continue handsome: Have it done, but keep that delightful present for me till I come to you; for I should be very sorry to leave it behind me here;

* Anthony de Godeau, Bishop of Vence and Grasse.

here: So take my advice, and, in the mean while, accept of a present from me that surpasses all presents past, present, and to come: This is not saying too much; for it is a fillet of pearls worth twelve thousand crowns: A large sum, you will say; but no more than I am willing to bestow on you: In short, examine it well, weigh it, observe how neatly it is set, and then tell me what you think of it. It is the finest I ever saw, and has been greatly admired: I had it from the Venetian Ambassador, our late neighbour, who is dead. I have sent you a book by the desire of my uncle Se-
vigne †. I fancy it is hardly a romance: I shall not give him the trouble of sending you La Fontaine's Fables, which are but you will see when you get them. You are a dear creature not to be with child; but you seem to have thoughts that way, which make me tremble. Your beauty subjects you to many dangers; because it is now useless to you. You say you think it is as well to be with child as not, it is an amusement. A fine reason indeed! but, for heaven's sake, child, consider that it is utterly destroying your health, and, in some measure, your life. We do all in our power here to amuse our good Cardinal: Corneille has read him a piece of his, which is to be performed in a little time: It puts me greatly in mind of the beauties of the ancients. Moliere is to read him his *Trissotin* *, which is exceedingly diverting; and Despreaux will give him his *Lutrin* and Art of Poetry †: This is all we can do for him: Poor man! He loves you sincerely, and is often talking of you to me, and we seldom find ourselves so ready to finish your praises, as we are to begin them. But, alas! when we come to reflect that our dear child has been so cruelly torn from us, nothing is capable of comforting us: As for me, I should be very sorry to be comforted: I pride myself neither on courage nor philosophy;

† Renaud de Sevigne: He had retired to Port Royal des Champs, where he passed the latter part of his time in exercises of the strictest piety, and died there the 16th of March, 1676. See The Necrologe de Port Royal des Champs, p. 117. Amsterdam edit.

* A character in the comedy of the Learned Ladies, (*Les femmes Scavantes*.)

† These two pieces had not then attained the degree of perfection they have appeared in since.

losophy ; but simply follow where my heart leads the way. It was said the other day, and I believe I told it you, that the true mark of a good heart was its capacity for loving : If this rule is just, I am become a person of great consequence, and should be not a little vain of it, had I not a thousand other reasons to reduce me to humility. Adhemar, I believe, loves me pretty well ; but he bears too great a hatred to the Bishop, and so do you too. This is owing to the life you lead : Were you here, you would not have time to do it. M. de Uzez has shewn me a memorial he has drawn up, which is taken from yours, with some alterations, and will work miracles. Trust wholly to him, you have nothing to do but send him whatever you think fit, without being the least apprehensive that he will suffer any thing to go out of his hands before he has given it its full degree of perfection. In every thing that comes from you folks, there is a little air of impetuosity, that is the true mark of the workman, like *Bassan's* dog.*

Here is a piece of news for you ! The King has given Messieurs de Charot to understand that he will make them Dukes and Peers of France ; that is to say, that they are immediately to be entitled to the honours of the Louvre, with an assurance of the first seats in parliament that are disposed of. The son is made Lieutenant-General of Picardy, a place which has been a long time vacant, with a pension of twenty thousand franks, and two hundred thousand franks more he is to receive of M. Duras, for the place of Captain of the *gardes de corps*, which he and his father are to resign in his favour. Think of this, and tell me, if Duras does not appear very happy in your eyes. To be put in possession of such a charming place, which has not its equal, both for the trust reposed in him, and the honour he enjoys thereby, of being constantly about the King's own person. While it is his quarter to be in waiting, he will follow the King to the army, and have the whole command of the household. We talk of nothing but war, and you may judge how disagreeable that is to me. There are some people here, who pretend to know perfectly well how matters will go ; but I fancy they

* *Bassan* was a painter who drew his dog in all his pieces.

they will find themselves deceived this campaign. All my hope is, that the horse will not be exposed in any of the sieges in Holland: However we must live and see how things will turn out. I have seen the Marquis de Vence, and he looked so young, that I asked him how his mamma did. Coulanges set me to rights, and Cardinal de Retz changed the conversation by talking of you. I am always wishing for Adhemar to repeat to me again how much you love me. You assure me yourself, that it is with a degree of tenderness answerable to mine. If I am not contented with that, surely I am very hard to be pleased.

I have just received your letter of Ash-Wednesday: indeed, child, you quite confound me with your praises and acknowledgments. This is only putting me in mind of what I would do for you, and makes me unhappy to think how little it is in my power to satisfy that inclination. Would I could so load you with benefits, as to oblige you to become ungrateful; for as we have often said, that is the only thing that is left when one has been so much obliged as to be no longer able to make a return: But, alas, I am not happy enough to reduce you to such a streight. Your thanks are more than sufficient to repay all I can do. What a charming creature you are! Nothing can be more diverting than what you say on that head. But now about this same *Bre-land**, what a folly is it to lose so much money at such a rascally game! It has been banished from among us for a downright cut-throat. We do do things in a more serious manner. You play against all chance: You lose for ever; take my advice, and do not continue it: Consider it is just so much money thrown away without having any diversion for it; on the contrary, you have paid 5 or 6000 franks to be the mere dupe of fortune. But I am rather too warm, my dear, and must say with *Tartuffe*, 'tis thro' an excess of zeal. And now I mention plays, here is *Bajazet* for you; if I could send you *Champmele* at the same time, you would find more beauties in it, for without the actresses the piece loses half its merit.—I am just mad after *Corneille*: He is going to give us *Pulcheria*, where we shall trace,

La

* A game at cards.

La main qui crayonna

La mort du grand Pompee & l'ame de Cinna.

*The same great hand, that with such matchless art
Drew Pompey's death, and painted Cinna's heart.*

In short, every thing must bow to his superior genius. Here is Fontaine's little fable too on the adventure of M. de Boufflers's curate, who was killed in the coach by his dead patron †. There was something very extraordinary in the affair itself. The fable is very pretty; but nothing to compare with the other that follows, it: I do not understand that *milk-pot* †.

I frequently hear from my poor boy. This same war displeases me greatly; in the first place, on his account, and then on account of some others, that I have a great regard for. Mad. de Vaudemont is at Antwerp, and seems to have no design of returning: Her husband is against us. Mad. de Courcelles * is to do penance very soon: I do not know whether she will touch the *petto adamantino* of Mons. d'Avaux § in that condition; but hitherto he has been as severe to her in prison as he was in his reply. My dear child, I know no bounds to my writing, and yet I must put an end to it at last: When one writes to different people, one cares not how soon one has done; but I love nothing so well as to be writing to you. I have a thousand good wishes for you from M. R. F. our Cardinal, Barillon; and especially from Mad. Scarron, who knows perfectly well how to praise you to my mind. You are greatly her taste. As for M. Coulanges and his wife, the Abbe, my Aunt, my Cousin, La Mouffe, there is but one cry amongst them, and that is, to remember them to you; but I am not at all in a humour to make litanies; there are a number yet that I have forgot: But here is enough to last for a long time. I continue still very fond of my dear little girl, notwithstanding her brother is such a great beauty.

L E T-

† See the XI Fable of the VII Book, p. 54. Paris edition of 1746.

† Another Fable of La Fontaine's (*Le pot au lait*) the moral of which is the same with the foregoing. See Fab. X. of the VII book, the same edition.

* See the letter of the 26 February, 1671.

§ The President de Memes, father to the chief President of that name.

LETTER CXL.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday 11 March, 1672.

I HAVE undertaken this day to write you the shortest letter that ever was, we shall see. The reason of my Wednesday's letters being a little upon the infinite now and then is, that I receive one of yours a Monday; I immediately sit down quite hot to answer it: I begin it, and lay it by again. Tuesday, if any business or news offers, I go to it again, to send you an account of what I know. Wednesday, I receive another letter from you, and then I have that to answer, and so conclude. Now all this, you see, must necessarily make a little volume. Sometimes too a very odd thing happens, and that is, I forget what I have told you in the beginning of my letter, and so clap it down at the end; for I never read my letter over till I have quite finished it; and when I find the stupid repetitions I have made, I make such faces at myself as would frighten you; but that is all, for by that time, it is too late to think of altering it, and so I let it go as it is, and make up my packet. I tell you this now, once for all, that you may know how to excuse this piece of dotage, when you meet with it again. Mademoiselle de Meri has sent you some of the prettiest shoes in the world; I observed one pair of them, among the rest, so very small, that they seem fit for nothing but to keep one's bed in. Do you remember how you laughed at this whim one evening? And now, my dear child, I desire you will not be at the pains of thanking me for all my good intentions, nor for every little trifle I send you; but reflect upon the principle that actuates me; one does not repay the most passionate love and tenderness with thanks: Consult your heart, and it will learn you other ways of being grateful. I have seen the Chevalier and the Abbe Valbelle: I am become a Provencial; I openly avow it; and all the Bretons are jealous of it. Farewel, my love; I fancy you know how much I am yours, without my telling it you; and for that reason I have resolved not to write a long letter this time; tho', if I knew any thing that would divert you, I should certainly let

you know it; for I should take no kind of delight in keeping too strictly to this foolish resolution.

L E T T E R C X L I.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 16 March, 1672.

YOU talk to me of setting out: Alas! my dear, I languish in the pleasing hopes of it; nothing now stops me, but my poor aunt *, who is dying between violent pain and the dropsy: It breaks my heart to see the condition she is in, and to hear the tender and moving manner in which she talks to me: Her courage, patience, and resignation, are altogether admirable. Monf. d'Hacqueville and I observe her distemper from day to day; he sees my inmost heart, and knows what a concern it is to me not to be at liberty just now: I am entirely guided by him, and we shall see between this and Easter, whether her disorder increases so much as it has done since I came hither; if it does, she will die in our arms: but if she should get some short relief, and be likely to languish for any time, I shall then set out as soon as M. de Coulanges comes back. Our poor Abbe is as vexed at this as myself; but we shall be able to judge how it will turn out by next month. I have nothing else in my head: You cannot wish to see me so much as I do to embrace you; so put some bounds to your ambition, and do not hope ever to equal me in that respect.

My son tells me, they lead a wretched life in Germany, and are working all in the dark. He was greatly concerned at the death of the poor Chevalier. You ask me if I am as fond of life as ever: I must own to you, that it has its mortifications, and those cutting ones too; but I am still more displeased with the thoughts of death: I look upon it as so great a misfortune to be obliged to end all one's pursuits in that, that I should desire nothing better than to return from whence I came. I find myself engaged in a scene of confusion and trouble: I was embarked in life without my own consent, and know I must leave it again; that distracts me; for how shall I leave it? in what manner?

* Henrietta de Coulanges, Marchioness de la Trousse.

by what door? when? in what disposition? Am I to suffer a thousand pains and torments that will make me die in desperation? Shall I lose my senses? Am I to die by some sudden accident? How shall I stand with God? What shall I have to offer to him? Will fear and inability make my peace with him? How am I sure I shall have no other sense, but that of fear? But what have I to hope? Am I worthy of entering into heaven? or have I deserved the torments of hell? Dreadful alternative! Alarming uncertainty! Can there be a greater madness than to trust one's eternal welfare to chance and hazard? Yet what is more natural, or can be more easily accounted for, than the foolish manner in which I have spent my life? I am frequently buried in thoughts of this nature, and then death appears so dreadful to me, that I hate life more for leading me to that, than I do for all the thorns its path is strewn with. You will ask me then, if I would wish to live for ever? Far from it; but if I had been consulted in the matter, I would very gladly have died in my nurse's arms; it would have spared me many vexations, and would have insured heaven to me at a very easy rate. But let us talk of something else.

I am just mad that you have received *Bajazet* from any hand but mine: It is that rascal *Barbin**, who has served me this trick, out of spite, because I do not write *Princesses of Cleves* and *Montpensier*†. You form a very just and true judgment of *Bajazet*, and you will find that I am of your opinion: I wish I could send you *Champmele* to enliven it a little. The character of *Bajazet* wants life, and the manner of the Turks are very badly preserved: They do not make such a deal of ceremony about marrying; the plot is badly prepared; and we are at a loss to account for such a deal of slaughter: The piece has doubtless its beauties; but nothing that can be called perfectly fine; nothing that strikes one; none of those strokes, that, like *Corneille's*, make one tremble. Pray, my dear child, be cautious how you compare *Racine* with him;

* A famous bookseller of that time.

† Two Romances written by Mad. de la Fayette, by which *Barbin* got a great deal of money.

let us always be sensible of the difference there is between the one and the other: The pieces of the latter are in many places cold and enervate; nor will he ever be able to go beyond *Alexander* and *Andromache*. Many people look upon Bajazet as inferior to either of these, and that is my opinion too, if I may be allowed to name myself. Racine's plays are written for Champmele, and not for posterity §; whenever he grows old and ceases to be in love, then it will be seen whether I am mistaken or not. Long live then our friend Corneille; and let us forgive the bad lines we meet with in him for the sake of those divine sallies that so often transport us, and those masterly strokes that bid defiance to imitation. Despreaux has said as much before me; and it is in general the opinion of every one of good taste, and as such let us abide by it.

Here is a *bon mot* of Mad. de Cornuel's, which has highly diverted the wits. M. Tombonneau, the son, has quitted the long robe, and taken to the jacket and trowsers: In short, he is resolved to go to sea; I do not know what the land has done to him: However, somebody told Mad. de Cornuel that he was going to sea. Lord bless the man! says she, has he been bit by a mad dog? As this was said off hand, it raised a great laugh.

Mad. de Courcelles is at a great loss. They have rejected all her petitions; but she says she is still in hopes that she shall have some favour shewn her, as the men are to be her judges. Our Coadjutor cannot do any thing for her just now; you tell me he is at present occupied like St. Ambrose. I think you may be very well contented that your girl was made after his *image and likeness*, without having your son like him too: But with the Coadjutor's leave, where did the little rogue get his pretty small mouth, and all the rest of his prettinesses? I find, after all, he is like his sister; this resemblance puzzles me a good deal. I love you dearly, my girl, for not being with child; content yourself

§ The event has proved by Mithridates, Phædra, and Athaliah, that Mad. de Sevigne's judgment partook of the prejudice of the times in which she wrote.

yourself then with being *uselessly handsome*, for the pleasure of not being continually dying. Ah! my dear, I can easily judge how people like you must employ their time and thoughts among your Provencials: I should think of them just as you do, and pity you with all my soul for being obliged to pass so many of the choicest years of your life amongst them. I am so little desirous of making a figure at your court in Provence, and have formed so perfect a judgment of it, from what I know of that in Brittany; that for the same reason, that in less than three days after being at Vitre, I wished for nothing so much as to return to my Rocks, so I solemnly declare to you the sole object of my desire is to pass the summer with you at Grignan, and no where else. My St. Laurence wine is at Adhemar's; I shall have it to-morrow: It is a long time since I thanked you for it *in petto*, which is very obliging, you will say. M. de Laon is vastly fond of being a cardinal in that manner. I am told that Mons. de Montausier *, in talking to the Dauphin about the dignity of Cardinal, told him, that it depended entirely upon the Pope, and that if he had a mind to raise a groom to the purple he might. Just at that instant came in Cardinal Bonzi; the Dauphin seeing him, asked him, if it was true that the Pope could make a groom a cardinal? His Eminence was a little surprised at first, till guessing the affair, he made answer, that doubtless the Pope might make choice of whom he pleased for that dignity; but that he had never heard of his Holiness taking a cardinal from his stables. I had the whole of this story from the Cardinal de Bruillon.

I have had a great deal of talk with M. d'Uzez; he will acquaint you with the conference he has had too; it is an admirable one; his understanding is so clear, and his words, in general, so well chosen, that they cannot fail of having great weight on these occasions: In short, he says and does every thing that is right. What was told you of Jarze was reported, but not for

* The Duke de Montausier was not only allowed by every one to be utterly incapable of flattery or falsehood; but was even at a loss in the common court-arts of dissimulation.

truth: They pretend that the lady's joy was excessive on account of the Chevalier de Lorraine's return. It is reported likewise, that the Count de Guiche and Mad. de Brissac are so much at cross-purposes with one another, that there is need of an interpreter between them. Write a line or two to our Cardinal; he loves you; the Fauxbourg * love you; and Mad. Scarron loves you; she is to pass her Lent here, and spends almost all her evenings with us. Barillon is here still: Would to heaven you were here too!

LETTER CXLII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 23 March, 1672.

MAD. de Villars, Chapelain, and one other person, are charmed with your Letter on ingratitude: Do not think me silly now; I know to whom I shew these short abstracts of your long Letters: I tell you I know whom I have to deal with, and never make a blunder; but preserve all the necessary precautions of time and place; but, in short, you have a delightful way of saying certain things: You may believe me: I know perfectly well what I advance. I will one day or another read some passages to you that will please you; especially that upon ingratitude. I am extremely fond of your little history of the Painter †; but poor man he was to die! Your hair curled *naturally* with curling irons, powdered *naturally* with a pound of powder, and the *natural* vermillion of your cheeks, laid on with carmine, is very pleasant; but after all, you was as handsome as an angel; I am very glad you are well enough to sit for your picture; and that in the midst of all your negligence, you can preserve so many charms. Mad. Scarron has received your

* Meaning the Duke de Rochefoucault and Mad. de la Fayette, who lived both in the Fauxbourg (or suburbs) of St. Germain, and to whom Mad. de Sevigne made frequent visits.

† A painter in Provence, whose name was Fauchier, who was taken violently ill, with a fit of the colick, as he was drawing Mad. de Grignan's picture in the habit of a Magdalen, and died the next morning.

your embassies ; there are no praises she does not give you, no esteem she thinks too great to shew you.

The Chancellor will not have such a magnificent funeral as was supposed ; they wanted a Prince of the blood to head the ceremony. The Prince excused himself by saying, he was indisposed. Monsieur the Duke said, such things might have done very well in former times, but that at present princes were greater folks than they were then : The Princes of Conti said, they could not do what the Duke had refused : In short, the Chancellor's family are in despair about it ; it was to no purpose to urge the instance of the Chancellor de Bellievre, whose funeral was honoured with the presence of a Prince of Conti.

The Count de Guiche was telling us wonders the other day about the wits of your warm climates ; he says he never passed a more agreeable time than whilst among them. I did not remember that ever you had mentioned a single person to me as the least distinguished in point of wit or understanding. Believe me, my dear, it is with the greatest concern that I find you so resigned with respect to our separation, while I feel it in the very marrow of my bones, without being able to receive the least comfort. As to my journey, it now depends wholly upon my aunt ; but in a month's time we shall see what we have to expect : This is now the only thing that stops me, otherwise I should set out with M. and Mad. de Coulanges : The Abbe and I do nothing but pine after the day of our departure. I admire how many things turn out, as it were, purposefully to vex and torment me. I am busied now in getting my son's equipage ready ; besides, accepting and returning bills of exchange. Every body is in debt, or busy about setting out. They say the small-pox is at Grignan : Is it true ? If so I shall be a little easier at being detained here. After all, my dear, be assured, that we think of nothing but setting out ; no consideration takes place of that desire, nor shall of our journey ; the heat itself, shall not stop me a moment.

You ask me what my aunt's distemper is ? She has a flatulent and watry dropsy together : She is swelled to a surprising size ; milk, which was the only thing
that

that used to give her relief, can no longer repair the great waste of moisture; she is quite spent, her liver is touched, and she is sixty-six; that is her disorder: Next month will determine whether she is to live or die: I pass many melancholy hours with her, and am greatly concerned to see her in such a condition. What you say upon the *adamantine* heart is admirable; it would be very convenient to have such an one, not in the sense we mean, but literally so; for want of it one is subject to a thousand uneasinesses. It is certain that love is a proud thing, and so it ought to be. M. de Grignan is very happy in being so good a Christian; I hope he will be able to convert me.

Monf. de Lauzun's place is not disposed of as yet. You may make your own reflections upon that, as well as upon his fire affair; it would have been a fine thing to have burnt poor M. Fouquet, who bears his confinement in such a noble manner, without giving himself up to a useless despair. All the talk is about war: The King has 200,000 men on foot: All Europe is in motion; and it is very plain, as you say, that the poor globular machine is left to itself. The Cardinal (*de Retz*) and I often talk about you; he has a sincere regard for you; and I, what have I, think you? My poor aunt returns you thanks for your kind remembrance of her. La Mousse trembles for his philosophy. I would have you say a word or two to the Cardinal about your machines; your machines that love, your machines that have the power of election, your machines that are jealous; and your machines that have fears: Go, go! Descartes never could pretend to make us believe all this.

LETTER CXLIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 30 March, 1672.

IS not this being too good, my dear child? You say you are fond of my Letters; you desire they should always be long, and flatter me with the agreeable imagination of your being not so well pleased with them when they are short: But then poor Grignan has enough to do, if his complaisance for you obliges him

to read such volumes. I remember he used to wonder how people could read such long letters; he seems to be much altered in his opinion: But I depend upon your prudence, not to let him see what you think will tire him. I am to ask your pardon: I thought you had not answered the Cardinal's Letter, but I find you have, and extremely well too. They say, that the English have engaged and defeated five sail of Dutch men of war; and that the Ambassador told the King, that his master * had already begun the war by sea, and hoped that he would now make his promise good, and begin it by land.

You know, child, what an esteem I have for the name of Roquesante †, and how much I venerate his virtue. You may be sure that his recommendation and yours must have a very great weight with me; but unfortunately in this case my credit and good-will are not alike strong. You have given the President you mention such an excellent character, that it would be an honour to have it in one's power to serve him: At all events I will mention it; but really every thing is now kept such a profound secret at Versailles, that one waits with patience the decision of the oracle. As to M. de Roquesante, if you forgot to make my compliments to him, in a particular manner, you and I shall certainly quarrel. You shudder at our Abbe's fever; I am obliged to you for it: But as you shudder by yourself, and the good Abbe did not shudder at all; so, look you, I did not shudder: His disorder was a constant flux for some time, but without any other accident; and I am persuaded it was worth a dozen years of health to him: God grant it. I have made him all your compliments on the occasion, with which he is greatly affected. My aunt is continually thanking

* Charles II. King of England.

† One of the judges of the Parliament of Aix, a man of real merit, and one of the Commissioners appointed to try M. Fouquet: He gave the clearest proofs of his great integrity and discernment, insomuch that Mad. de Sevigne ever afterwards held him in the highest esteem. Few people are ignorant of the great part Mad. de Sevigne took in M. Fouquet's affair. See her MS. Letter to M. de Pomponne on that trial.

you: The condition she is in would pierce the most insensible heart: She grows bigger every day, and nothing she takes has the least effect: She said to me a while ago, I am a lost woman, child. She prepares herself for death, and speaks of it without any apprehension: She only expresses her astonishment, that there should be so much pain and torment required to kill one so weak as her. Certainly there are some kinds of death very dreadful and cruel; hers is the most deplorable that can be imagined: She receives all the little services I render her with the greatest sweetness and good-nature; and I am as ready to offer them; and am, indeed, so greatly affected with the pain I see her suffer, and the despair my poor cousin is in, that I cannot refrain from tears.

I will tell you, my dear child, a thought that is come into my head, concerning the frequent losses you and M. de Grignan meet with at play. I would have you both be a little cautious: It is not very pleasing to be made a dupe of; and be assured, that it is not very common to be perpetually the winner or the loser. It is not long since I was let into the tricks of the Hotel de la Vieuville. You remember, I suppose, how our pockets were picked there. You are not to imagine every body plays as fair as you do yourself. The concern I have for your interest makes me say thus much; and as this comes from a heart entirely devoted to you, I am persuaded you will not be displeased at it; as you will not, I suppose, at knowing that Querouaille*, whose fortune had been predicted before she left this kingdom, has fully verified it: The King of England was passionately fond of her, and she, on her side, had no aversion to him: In short, she is now about eight months gone with child. Poor Castlemain† is turned off: Such is the fate of mistresses in that kingdom.

I have received your letter of the 23d, written on the wings of the wind, as was mine of February last: But let me tell you, my dear child, it is a charming one, though not an answer to mine; but it is worth a thousand

* Afterwards Dutches of Portsmouth, mistress to Charles II.

† The Countess of Castlemain, a former mistress of that monarch

and answers ; and it is thus then that you write to me when you have nothing to say ! Indeed I am, to the greatest degree, delighted with it. You say a thousand kind and tender things to me in it ; and I must own, that I take pleasure in flattering myself with their being all true. But who is this Breton that you serve for my sake ? I assure you all the Provencials find an interest in me.

The poor Abbe † is to make his public act to-day : What a joke ! To dispute against him, to plague and torment him, and use all their endeavours to catch him out ; and yet he must answer to all. I cannot think any thing more unjust than such a way of going on, and it must sour the mind greatly. You talk about the weather, ours here is delightful : We have for three months together had a fine clear frost, now it is over, and spring begins to make its appearance. Nothing can be more prudent than you are : How comes it then, that you are so extravagant ? I am shocked at M. de Vardes' inconstancy : He was not so till his passion began to cool, and has no other excuse than that he can love no longer : This is very cruel ; but I had rather it were so, than to be left for another : This is an old quarrel between us : Indeed, there are many things which I dislike in M. de Vardes. If Corbinelli wishes me in Provence, it is no more than what I do myself every day of my life.

Monsieur and Mad. de Coulanges are too much indebted to you for all your kindnesses : They intend writing to you. I shall see them set out with a great deal of regret. M. de Coulanges fully proposes to see *Jacquemar* and *Marguerite* * before he dies. As for his wife, she is to go to Grignan, where, I hope, we shall receive her together, after she has done me the honours of Lyons. I was told this evening, that the Abbe Grignan had performed wonders at the Sorbonne to-day : Our Cardinal is in raptures about it.

L E T-

† Louis Joseph Adhemar de Monteil, brother to M. de Grignan, nominated in 1680 to the Bishoprick of Evreux, and afterwards to that of Carcassonne.

* Two figures that strike the hour on the clock that is in the belfry at Lambesc.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday 1 April, 1672.

WHAT you have wrote to Guitaut, my dear child, concerning the hopes you are in of seeing me quickly in Provence, has filled me with transports of joy. You can easily judge the pleasure one has in hearing such things from a third person, however well one might know them before: Yet let me assure you, that even this cannot add to the desire I already have of coming to you, for that is infinite. My aunt is my only hindrance: She is so very ill, that I do not think it possible for her to continue long in her present condition: I will let you know how she goes on; for this is the thing of the greatest consequence to me at present.

Yesterday I saw Mad. de Verneuil, who is returned from Verneuil and the jaws of death: A milk diet has restored her to her health: She is handsome and well made: She is no longer so red and bloated as she was, but is now quite agreeable: She is loving, obliging, and can speak well of people: She desired a thousand kind remembrances to you.

Mad. de Chaulnes and M. de Barillon played the scene between Vardes and Mademoiselle de T... till we were all of us ready to cry: They out-did themselves in it. As to Champmele, there is something so surprising in her, that in your life-time you never saw the like: In short, it is the player, and not the play, that the town runs after now. I went to *Ariana* wholly for the sake of seeing her: The play itself is dull and insipid, the rest of the players execrable; but, when Champmele appears, you hear a general murmur of applause, every creature is charmed, every one sympathises in her distress.

The Chevalier de Lorraine went the other day to see La F... She wanted to put on the forsaken nymph, and affected a great deal of confusion at the sight of him. The Chevalier, with his frank open countenance, was resolved to put her out of her pain

at

at once, and says to her, "What ails you, Mademoi-
 "selle? What makes you so melancholy? Is there any
 "thing so very extraordinary in what has happened
 "between you and I? We have loved each other
 "once, and now it is over. Constancy is no longer
 "looked upon as a virtue in people of our age: It
 "will be best for us to forget what has passed, and
 "behave to one another like other people. This is a
 "very pretty little dog of yours: Who gave it you?"
 And so ended this curious love affair.

What books are you reading now, my dear? I am
 reading the discovery of the Indies by Christopher Co-
 lumbus, which diverts me exceedingly; but your little
 girl does so much more: I love her dearly, and I do
 not see how I can help it: She is very fond of your
 picture, and makes much of it in such a pretty
 manner, that there is no avoiding to kiss her directly.

LETTER CXLV.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 6 April, 1762.

MY aunt's illness makes me that I hardly know
 where I am, or what I do: The Abbe and I are
 quite out of patience about it, and are resolved, if her
 disorder should be likely to last any time, to set out for
 Provence; for, otherwise, there would be no end to
 one's good-nature. You may always rest assured, that
 I have a stronger inclination to set out, than you can
 have for me to do it. You may think this is saying a
 great deal, and so do I too; but it is impossible to say
 more than I think on that head. I never fail to tell my
 aunt of your kind remembrances. Though she is sen-
 sible that she is very near death, yet her usual good-
 nature and complaisance put her upon dissembling her
 sentiments, and seeming to have hopes in medicines,
 that she is certain can no longer have any efficacy,
 purely to prevent driving my poor cousin to despair;
 but, when she finds herself at liberty, and can give a
 vent to her words, then one may see what her true
 thoughts are, and that she looks upon the approaches
 of death with the greatest calmness, resignation and
 constancy.

I am

I am quite frightened at the disasters that attend you in Provence. I am rejoiced that your little boy has escaped the small-pox; but then the plague: what do you think of that? I am violently alarmed at the thoughts of it: It is a disease that has not its equal, and which the heat of your climate is far from being proper to defend you against. I desire his Excellency the Governor, will, in his wisdom, give all necessary orders upon the occasion.

Saturday last the Duke gave a hunting match to the *angels* *, and afterwards a supper at St. Maur of the most delicate fish the sea could afford. From thence they returned to a little house near the Hotel de Conde, where, after the clock had struck twelve, for which they waited very scrupulously, there was served up the most elegant *medianoche* that ever was seen, consisting of the richest and most exquisite viands of all sorts. This little excursion has not been very well looked upon, and Mad. de Grancei's great good-nature has been the subject of general admiration. The company consisted of the Countess of Soissons, Mesdames de Coesquen and Bordeaux, several gentlemen, and, among the rest, the Chevalier de Lorraine; there were hautboys, bag-pipes and violins, but not a word of the Dutchess or Lent; the one was in her own apartment, and the other in the cloisters. The ladies were all brown beauties; it has been thought they wanted a little yellow to set them off. M. de Coulanges is in despair about the painter's death †. Did not I say he would die! This gives a great grace to the beginning of the history; but the catastrophe is very melancholy and vexatious for me, who made sure of the fair *Magdalen with her fine natural curls* ‡.

I am charmed to find you are not with child. Ah! my dear child, enjoy awhile the pleasure of being in health: Take some respite, and do not add this

* Mesdames de Marei and de Grancei, daughters to the Marquis de Grancei.

† The same painter as mentioned in the preceding letter.

‡ See the note to that part of the letter.

vexation to the many others I meet with in life. The old MADAME † is dead of an apoplexy, which has held her for about these twelve months. So now there is the palace of Luxembourg for MADEMOISELLE, and we shall take possession of it soon. MADAME had cut down all the trees on her side of the garden through pure contradiction; so that that lovely garden looks quite ridiculous: However, Providence has saved it from ruin. MADEMOISELLE has nothing to do now, but to cut them down on both sides, and then put *Le Notre* * into them, who will soon make them a second Thuilleries. She could not be prevailed upon to see her mother-in-law when she was dying: This was not very pretty. M. de Lorraine's treaty of marriage is broken off after all: This is a great falling off for your poor friend §. I have made your compliments to Duras and the Charots. The Marquis of Villeroy will not be permitted to leave Lyons this campaign: His father was assured of this on asking leave for his son to return to the army. There is no knowing the true reason of his disgrace. M. de la R. F. is relapsed into so dreadful a fit of the gout, attended with such a violent fever, that he is worse than ever you saw him yet: He entreats you to pity him; and I would defy you to see him without having the greatest compassion for him. My dear child, I must leave you. I repent for having wished for an heart of adamant; for I should be very sorry not to love you as well as I do, whatever pain it may cost me. Do not you wish for it neither: Let us keep the hearts we have got: You know excellently well the way to mine.

LETTER CXLVI.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday 8 April, 1672.

WAR is at length declared, and nothing is now talked of but setting out for the field. Canaples has asked the King's permission to serve in the English

† Margaret of Lorraine, second wife to Gaston of France, Duke of Orleans.

* The most famous gardener of his time.

§ The Princess of Vaudemont.

glish army; and is set off very much displeased at not having been employed here. Marechal du Plessis is not to leave Paris: He is now become a sober citizen, and has laid aside all his laurels; nor do I think the figure he makes at present so very bad, considering the great reputation he has already gained. He told the King, he could not forbear envying his children the honour of serving his Majesty; and that now he wished for nothing so much as death, since he could be of no longer use to him. The King embraced him very kindly, and told him, "Marechal, the end of all our labours is to gain a reputation like that you have already acquired: It must now be agreeable to rest after so many victories." And indeed, I think it must be a great happiness not to be forced to put it in the power of chance or fortune to overturn the reputation of a whole life past. Marechal Bellefond is at la Trape, where he passes the holy week; but, before he went thither, he talked in very high terms to M. de Louvois, about some abatement he wanted to make in his post of General under the Prince: He made his Majesty the arbitrator, and came off with great honour.

The Queen is constantly at me about your children and my journey to Provence: and is not pleased, that your son is like you, and your daughter is like her father: I always answer in one manner. Mad. Colbert very often talks to me of your beauty; and, indeed, who does not? Do you know, child, that it is absolutely necessary for you to come and look on us a little here? I will pave the way for you in a manner that shall take the trouble off your hands. I have spoke to M. de Pomponne about a First President: He says he knows nothing of the matter as yet, but believes it will be some stranger.

My aunt is so ill that I do not think she will be long a hindrance to me: She is almost suffocated, and swells every day more: There is no beholding her without being deeply affected: I am greatly so, and shall be much more with the loss of her: You know how much I always loved her. It would have been a great comfort to me to have left her with some prospect

pect of a cure, that might have restored her to us once more. I will let you know the end of this long and dismal sickness.

M. and Mad. de Coulanges are going to Brittany. There is no other place for governors now but their governments. We are at the eve of a sharp war, which gives me the greatest concern. Your brother is very dear to me: We are upon an extreme good footing together: He has an affection for me, and studies to please me, and I, on my side, am a true mother-in-law, and am quite busied about his affairs. I should be very unjust, was I to complain of either of you: You are, if any thing, both of you too good in your several ways. This is all you will have from me for this day, my love. This morning I had a Provencial, a Breton, and a Burgundian, at my toilette.

LETTER CXLVII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 13 April, 1672.

I MUST own to you, my dear child, that the loss of my letters gives me a good deal of uneasiness; but do you know that it would give me much more to lose any of yours? I have known what it is, nothing can be more cruel. But, my dear, I am quite charmed with you; you write Italian like Cardinal Ottobani, and even mix a little Spanish with it; witness *manera*, which is not a word of ours: And as to your phrases, I am sure I could do nothing like them: I would have you take a pleasure in speaking it too; it is a very pretty accomplishment; you pronounce it well, and have time enough upon your hands; so pray go on with it, and let me be agreeably surpris'd with finding you an adept in it at my arrival. You are very good and obedient in not being with child: I thank you for it from the bottom of my soul; take as much care to please me, by avoiding getting the small-pox. I am frighted at your fun: Why it burns peoples brains! Apoplexies are as frequent with you in that country as the vapours are among us; and I find your head swims sometimes as well as the rest;
Mad.

Mad. de Coulanges is in hopes of keeping her's found at Lyons, and is making great preparation for her defence against the Governor *: If she comes to Grignan, it will be to give you an account of her victory, and not to tell you of her defeat; for I do not think the Marquis will so much as put on the appearance of the lover; for there are people that look sharp after him, and are not to be imposed upon. He is just distracted at not going to war, as I am at not setting out with M. and Mad. de Coulanges; it was a thing fully agreed upon by us all; but for the unhappy condition of my poor aunt: However, we must have patience; nothing shall stop me, when I am once at liberty. I have just bought a travelling coach, have ordered riding habits to be made; and, in short, am ready to set out to-day before to-morrow. Never did I long for any thing so much: Depend upon it I will not lose a moment. It is my ill fortune always to meet with disappointments that no one else meets with. I wish I could send our Cardinal to you; his conversations would be great amusement to you; for I can find nothing you have to divert you where you are; but instead of the road of Provence, he is going to Commerci. They say that the King has some regret for the departure of Canaples: He had a regiment, and was broke: He has applied for ten several abbeyes, and was refused them all: He desired to serve as Aid de Camp this campaign; he was refused that too: Upon which he wrote a letter to his brother, full of expressions of the profoundest respect for his Majesty, and then went on board the duke of York's* ship, who has a great regard for him. The Marechal de Gramont was so transported the other day, at a fine sermon of Bourdaloue's, that he cried out as loud as he could, in the middle of a passage that struck him more than the rest, *By God he is in the right*; MADAME burst out a laughing, and there was such a stop put to the sermon that nobody knew what would come of it. If your preachers are such as you represent them to be, I am

apt

* The Marquis de Villeroy,

§ Afterwards James II. King of England.

apt to think they will be in no great danger of being interrupted by such admirations. Farewell, my dearest love, when I think on the countries that separate us, I am almost beside myself, and can have no rest. I am very angry with Adhemar for changing his name †: He shall be called *the little unnatural* ‡.

LETTER CXLVIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Good-Friday 15 March, 1672.

YOU are well acquainted with the kind of life I lead on these days, my dear child; to add to which I have the mortification of not having you with me, nor being able to set out to you as soon as I would: The extreme desire I have for it makes me sometimes afraid that God will, perhaps, never permit me to enjoy that blessing: However, I am always in readiness. But after all, is it not a most cruel and barbarous thing to look upon the death of a person, that is so dear to one, as the beginning of a thing that one ardently wishes for? What do you think of the disposition of the things of this world? I must own I am astonished at it: We should profit by those that are displeasing to us, and make use of them as so many penances. And now we are mentioning penances, M. Coulanges relates such things of those that are performed at Aix, as makes me think the people mad; and I hardly know how to credit all he says upon that score*. Mad. de Coulanges has been at St. Germain's, and has brought me back a thousand unaccountable things, that there is no committing to writing, and which makes me very ready to give in to your way of thinking, which you told me the other day, about the horror of seeing an infidelity: That part of your letter was very

† After the death of the Chevalier de Grignan, which happened the 6 February, 1672, Monsieur d'Adhemar took the title of Chevalier de Grignan; but afterwards upon marrying the youngest daughter of the late Marquis of Oraison, of the house of Aqua, he resumed that of count Adhemar. See the note to letter XVII. Vol. I.

‡ Le petit denature.

* The societies of Penitents at Aix were wont to have certain processions, which lasted from the eve of the Holy Thursday to Good-Friday, and which have been laid aside for some time on account of the great indecencies committed at them.

ry diverting and sensible ; but you see every body is not of our way of thinking. Surely, my dear child, you must be very angry when your poor China is not worthy of being sacrificed to your wrath ; but you must be for breaking iron itself. I am really sorry for you when I think that you had nobody by to laugh at you ; for, in my opinion, such a kind of humour kept to one's self, is worse than the small-pox. But *a propos*, how are you off for that now ? Is your little one quite safe ? Our Cardinal said a thousand kind things for you this evening ; he is going to St. Denis *, to assist at the Easter ceremony ; he will return for a short time, and then adieu. Mad. de la Fayette goes to-morrow to a little house she has near Mindon, where she has been before : She intends to pass a fortnight there, as it were between heaven and earth, and is resolved neither to think, speak, answer, or hear : She is quite wearied with saying good night and good morning, and has almost every day a touch of a fever, which a little rest always carries off : therefore it is very necessary she should have it : I intend to go to see her. Poor M. de la R. F. is in the old chair, drowned in melancholy ; it is no hard matter to guess what ails him. I do not know any news to-day. The musick at St. Germain's is quite divine, which is more than I can say of the singing at the Minims. I was there a while ago, and my little girl with me, who met with a great many of her acquaintance there. I love that little creature rather too well ; but I cannot exactly measure those sort of things : *I had the honour of being your father's servant*, must serve me. I think for my excuse : Do not you think it will do very well ? The reason of my not mentioning Mad. de la Troche to you so frequently is, that the waves of the sea are not more confused than she is in her behaviour to me ; she is pleased and displeased ten times in a week. This fickleness of temper makes her company very disagreeable. The preference I give to the Fauxbourg is a point that I cannot easily give up : I know myself as much beloved by all there as it is possible to be : I can never come unseasonably ; and I am at all times the same to them ;

* Cardinal de Retz was Abbe of St. Denis.

them ; besides our Cardinal frequently gives me the rendezvous there : And what can I do after all this ? In a word, I give up the pleasing Mad. de la Troche without giving up the love I have for her ; for she will always find me the same, whenever she chooses to do justice to herself : I have many good witnesses of my conduct, with respect to her, who all think me in the right ; and sometimes even wonder at my patience. Be sure you do not answer a word to all this ; for if she should take it in her head to see your letters, and should find your disapprobation in any of them, all would be over with us. Indeed, she never has seen any of them as yet ; for there are very few that I think worthy of it : Mad. de Villars is my favourite in that respect. If I was Queen of France or Spain, I should think that she wanted to make her court to me ; but as it is, I am sure it can be only out of pure regard for you, that she interests herself so much in our correspondence. She is enchanted with your remembrance of her : She will not set out so soon as was imagined, for a certain reason that you will easily guess, when I tell you, that she cannot go but at the expence of the King her Master ; and that moreover her assignments are retarded* : However, we declare now, that we have nothing to say against the Spaniards, as they abide strictly by their treaties. Their Ambassador is here, and quire fills our little Minims with his fine liveries. My dear child, I am going to prayers, in order to fit myself for the morrow's solemnity : I must at least endeavour to preserve that act of my life as free as possible from the imperfections that attend the others. I love and embrace you : I wish I could feel my heart as warm towards my God, as it is towards you.

• L E T.

* Mad. de Villars was upon the point of setting out for Spain, to which Court the Marquis her husband had been lately appointed ambassador.

* LETTER CXLIX.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday 20 April, 1672.

YOU promise to send me some of the songs they make in Barbary: Well, you will not have so much upon your conscience in communicating to me the little scandal that passes at Tunis and Algiers, as I have in furnishing you with all the ill-nature of this place. My dear child, when I reflect, that the Mediterranean sea is your next-door neighbour, I cannot help feeling my heart afflicted. There are certain things in the world that fill one with dread; they bring nothing new with them, indeed; but then they are looked on in a point of light that surprises one. I saw your three Provencials yesterday; Spinola was one of them, he gave me your letter of the 21st of last month; if I can be of any service to him I will, as far as is in my power. I have a great respect for his name: There is a Spinola, who lost one of his hands in romantick manner: He was a second Artaban. Your Spinola shewed me a letter in Italian, full of nothing but your praises; I send you a copy of it. I am highly delighted with the apostrophe to the King of France. He tells me that you speak Italian very well; I commend you greatly for it; nothing can be prettier; had I been in a place where I could have opportunities of practising it, I should certainly have done it: Do not grow weary of it. I fancy M. d'Usez will have informed you of the conversation he had with the King; nothing could be wished for more than what then passed. That worthy Prelate is going to leave us very soon, and his absence will be a great loss to your affairs here. Mad. Brissac makes no ceremony now of receiving the Count de Guiche at her house; they are scarce to be seen any where else: She goes very seldom to M. de la R. F. and Mad. de la Fayette is at her little country-house; so there is very little intimacy now between them and that Dutchess. I had mentioned Mad. de la Troche to you when you wrote to me about her: Now you know the whole affair; however, as she cannot well live without

without me, she has broke the ice, and is all good-humour again; I am very glad of it; for I take things just as they happen: If I had ever so little more warmth in my temper, I should sometimes be very angry with her. This is just the taste you would have me be in, easy and unconcerned at all events: A happy state indeed! But alas! I am far from tasting the sweets of it! You even alarm me, when you seem to wish it. Methinks you are capable of doing whatever you will; and perhaps, at a time when I feel the most lively tenderness for you, I may, on a sudden, find you quite calm and unmoved. Ah! let me not perceive such an apathy in you, when I come to Provence! I shall regret my journey, I assure you, if I meet with any of that icy tranquillity. I am now very near my departure; but, alas! my dismissal will cost me many tears. My poor aunt is in a most deplorable condition: Her swellings increase every day; and she has such racking pains as would rend the heart of the most obdurate. Mad. de Coulanges took leave of her yesterday with tears in her eyes; tho' it was not a formal leave, yet, as both she and her husband imagine they shall never see her again, it was great affliction to them. As for me, I pass the most part of the day in sighing by her bed-side. I am quite drowned in sorrow; the caresses and affectionate speeches she bestows on me go to my very soul: She talks of dying as she would of setting out on a journey: She has always had good spirits, and she keeps them up to the very last. This morning she received the sacrament as her last passport and Easter-offering, and hopes to receive it once more. Her devotion was amazing; we all melted into tears to see her: She was in her chair, for she could not bear the bed: but she afterwards fell upon her knees; and was then the most mournful and affecting spectacle of devotion that can be imagined.

I felt the greatest uneasiness at parting with M. and Mad de Coulanges; they have both a very great friendship for me; I expect to meet them again at Lyons. I am going to settle my little household, in hopes of seeing you once more there. Every one's time now

is employed in taking leave of their friends: Every body is in a hurry: Every body is setting out. The Countess of Lude is come hither post to take leave of her husband; she goes back again in about a week, after she has held his stirrup, and sent him off to the army with the rest. I assure you every one is in great apprehensions about their friends.

I passed my Palm Sunday at St. Mary's, in my usual occupations and reflections. Barillon has made a long stay here; but he is going away at last, as you have ordered him to attend his duty. Your example leaves him not a word to say: He will have a fine place of it; it will cost him at least 50000 franks for his table; but he knows where to get them*. Mad. de C*** is certainly turned mad, at least we think so here. What a whim, to go wandering about Italy like an unfortunate princess, when she might return home and settle with her mother, one of whose greatest afflictions, poor woman! is the foolish behaviour of her daughter: And reason enough she has! for in my life I never saw any thing so ridiculous. We do not know whether La Marans is employed above or below ground; she seldom sees her *son*† or Mad. de la Fayette, and then stays but for a moment, and away again with Mad. de Schomberg, who comes to take her up: It is very vexatious not to be carried back by Mad. de Sevigne: She does not at all like to visit me. But what do you tell me of! Is your little boy turned brown! I thought you said he was fair; you always boasted of him to me as such: But, sincerely speaking, is he brown? Do not you jest with me? I have a great mind to send you word, that your girl is fair; but be it as it will, all your children carry the mark of the workman about them.

The little Du Bois§ is set out to follow M. de Louvois†, and I already begin to perceive his absence. I went yesterday to the post-office to endeavour to make

* M. Barrillon was Ambassador in England.

† M. de la Rochefoucault.

§ The Post-master whom Mad. de Sevigne had engaged in her interest to facilitate the correspondence between her daughter and her.

† Post-master General and Secretary of War.

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make friends there, or see if Du Bois had not recommended me to somebody; but they were all new faces to me, and did not seem to think me of any great consequence. I begged of them to let my letters be laid by themselves, and I would send for them in the morning, which I did not fail to do; but they sent me back word, that assuredly there were none for me. Here am I fallen from the clouds: I cannot live without a letter from you: Perhaps you may have directed them to somebody hereabouts, and they may be sent me to-morrow. I wish it may be so, and that I may be able to set all matters relating to our correspondence upon the same footing as before.

LETTER CL.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday 22 April, 1672.

I RECEIVED yours of the 13th instant, just when it was too late to answer it; for notwithstanding all the care I had taken about the post, the mails had been left to the carelessness of the clerks, which was just what I apprehended. I shall use all my endeavours to make some new friend at the post-office; but, in fact, I had much rather be gone, if my poor aunt would do one thing or the other: It is a piece of cruelty to say this; but it is no less cruel to find duty thus bar my way, when I was ready to set out to see you. My situation at present is far from being agreeable. I am very impatient to know what passed in your journey to the St. Baume†: It is your *Notre Dame des Anges*. The Marquis de Vince, who is extremely obliging and civil to me, has given me a frightful description of the way to it†. He has lost his eldest son lately: I really pity the poor man; for ve-

† The Sainte Baume is a large grotto cut out in the solid rock, where, by the tradition of that country, but without the least foundation in truth or reason, it is said that St. Mary Magdalen retired to finish her life in patience and mortification.

† "Mais si d'une adresse admirable

"L'ange a taille ce roc divin,

"Le demon cauteleux & fin

"En a fait l'abord si effroyable,

"Sachant

ry often the tears are ready to start from his eyes, but he restrains himself as well as he can: He appears to me to be very warm in your interests.

I have been with the Cardinal to see Mad. de la Fayette: We found her better than she had been at Paris. We had a great deal of discourse about you. He is to leave us next Monday, and will take leave of you in the same manner as he bid you welcome. He is sincerely fond of you; and you may be sure of his answer to the proposal concerning his being archbishop of Aix. We were laying down the manner of life he would lead, divided between the desire of seeing you, and the fear of making himself ridiculous: We laid out the hours, and determined the punishments due to the first who should presume to make any remarks upon his attachment to you. This conversation had like to have carried us beyond *Fleuri* *. D'Hacqueville, and the Abbe Pontcarre, were with us, and I was in great state with the three men. I am going directly to take a walk for three or four hours at Livri: I am very melancholy, and cannot give vent to it here: I will try what the verdure of the spring, and the musick of the nightingales, can do towards restoring the tranquillity of my mind. There is nothing to be seen here, but people taking leave of one another, and there is no passing in the streets for waggons and equipages going for the camp. I shall return back here to-morrow to send off my son's; but that I shall do with very little trouble, for they are only chests that can go by porters.

“ Sachant bien que le pelerin

“ Se donneroit cent fois audible,

“ Et se damneroit en chemin.

Voyage de la Chap. & de Bach.

Thus ENGLISHED.

But tho' with wond'rous skill so fine

An angel form'd this rock divine;

The devil, ever fly and knowing,

Made such an horrid way to go in,

That pilgrims, in their journey thither,

Fatigu'd with braving winds and weather,

Meeting with all this labour there,

Might fret and fume, and curse and swear,

More than their pray'rs could make amends,

And so old Satan have his ends.

* The name of the country-seat where Mad. de la Fayette was at that time.

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ters. He bought all his horses in Germany: I shall take care and supply him with money during the campaign. Yesterday I took my leave of the *little unnatural* †: I could hardly forbear weeping. This campaign will be very warm, and I have no great dependance on his care of himself, *Poco duri purche m'inalzi* ‡: That must be his device after all. Adieu, my dear, I shall say no more to you this time. I am going to St. Baume; that is, I am going to a place where I shall do nothing but think of you, and in a manner, perhaps, too tender. It will be very hard for me to behold the gardens, the walks, the little bridge, the avenue, the field, the mill, the vifto, the wood, &c. without thinking of my dear child, whom I have so often seen in every one of them.

Little Daquin is appointed first Physician to the King: So you see that favour can do as much as merit.

† The Chevalier de Grignan.

‡ Tho' short my duration, let me rise.

